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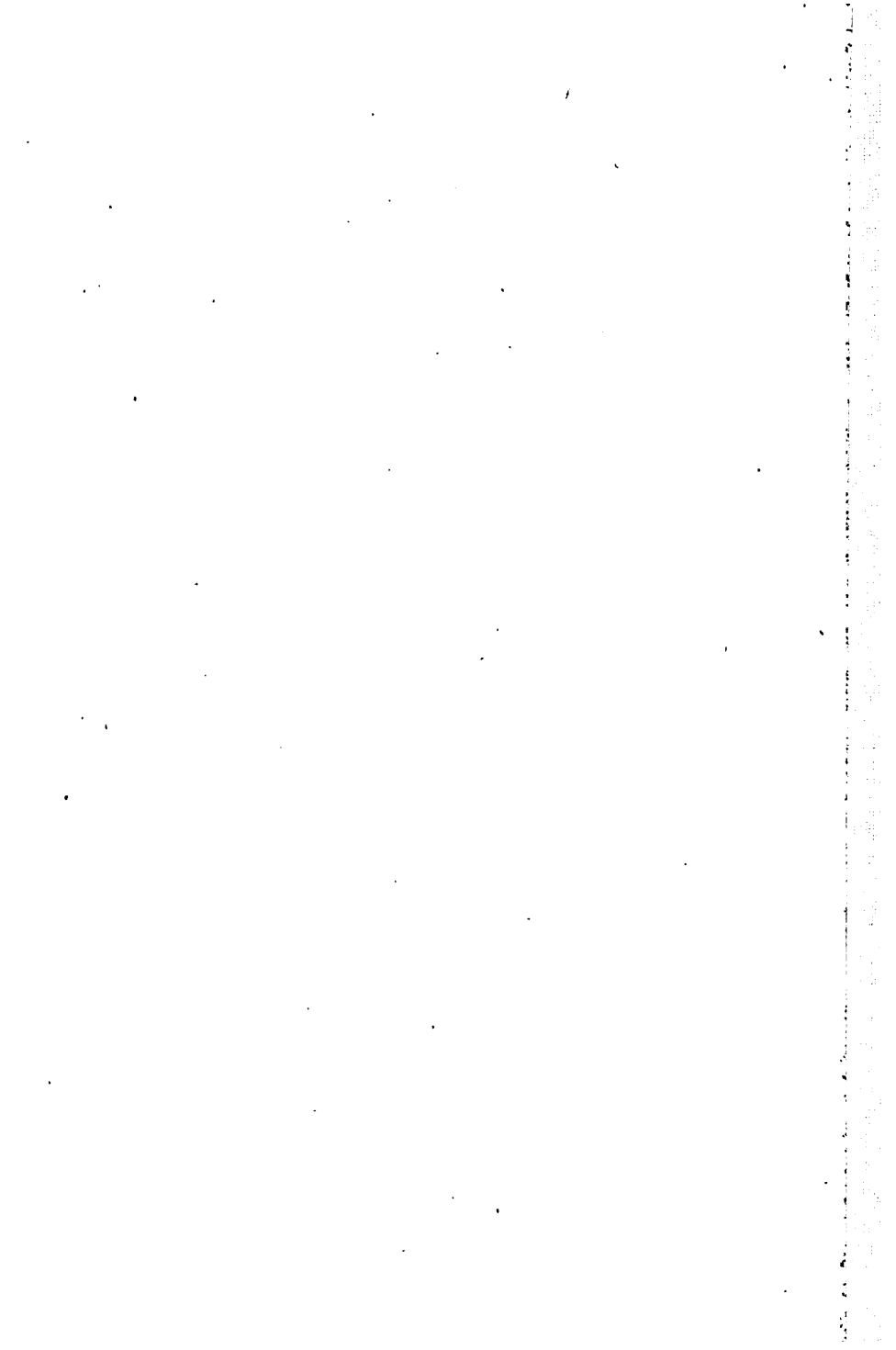
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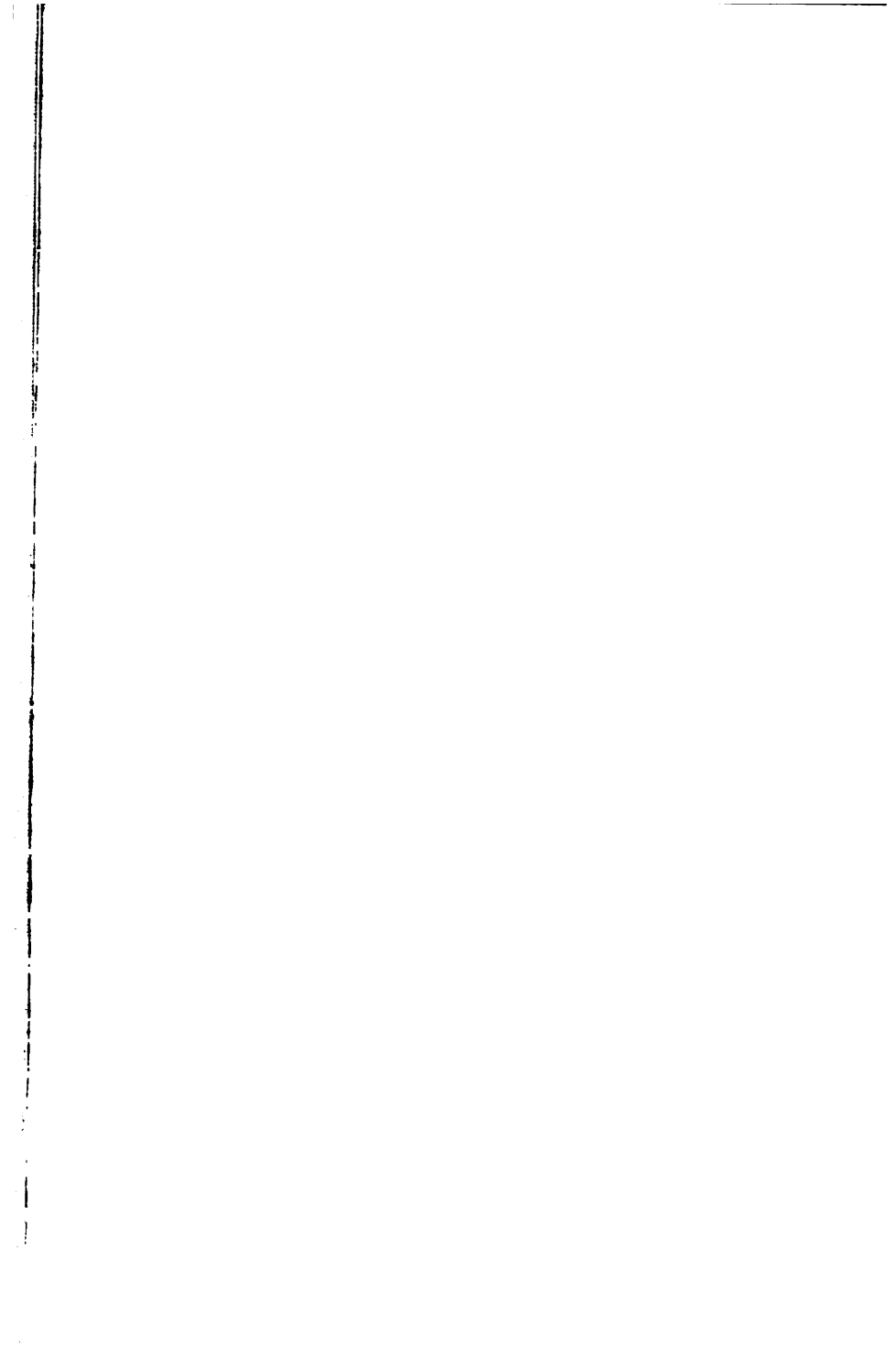
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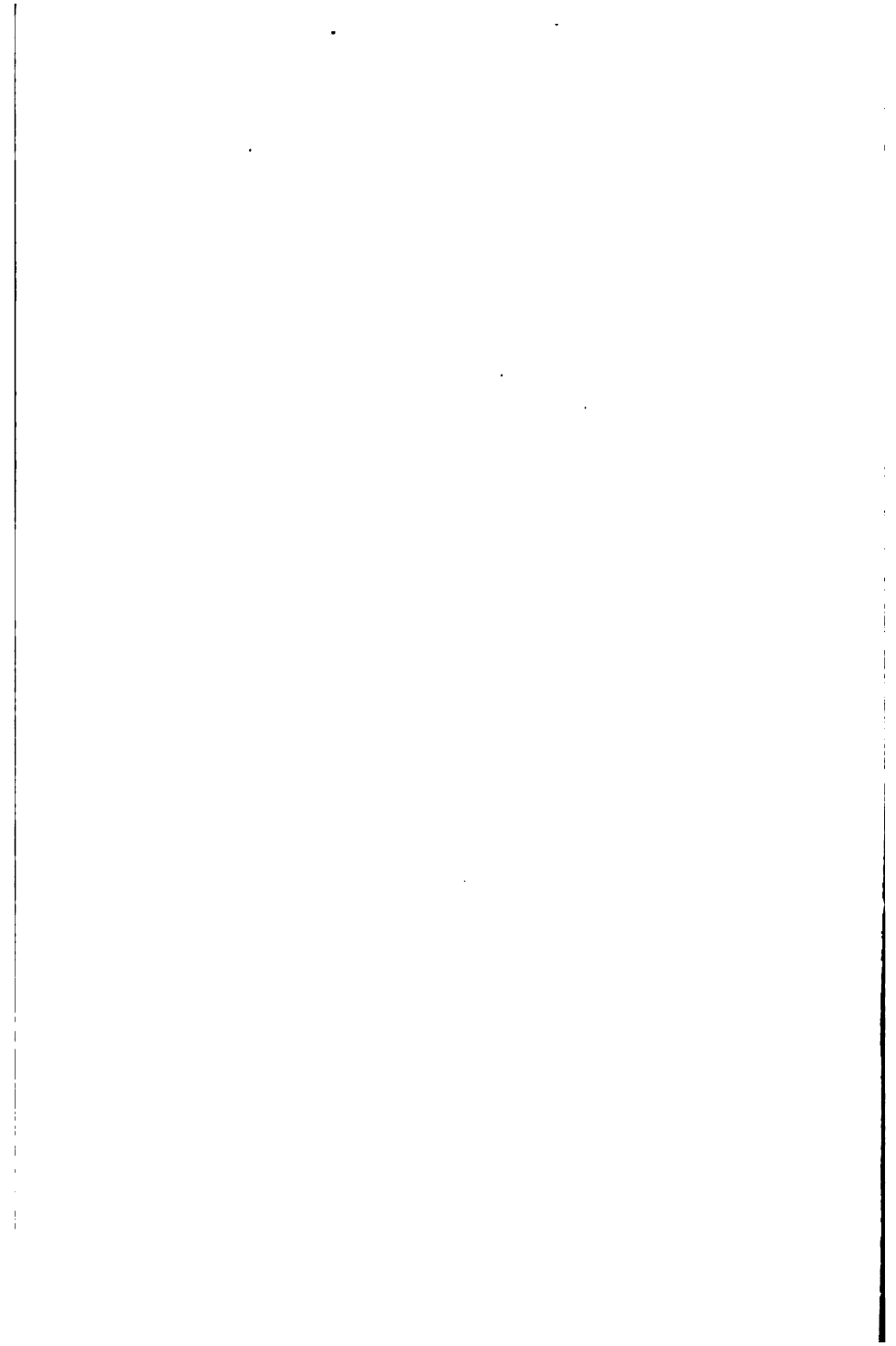
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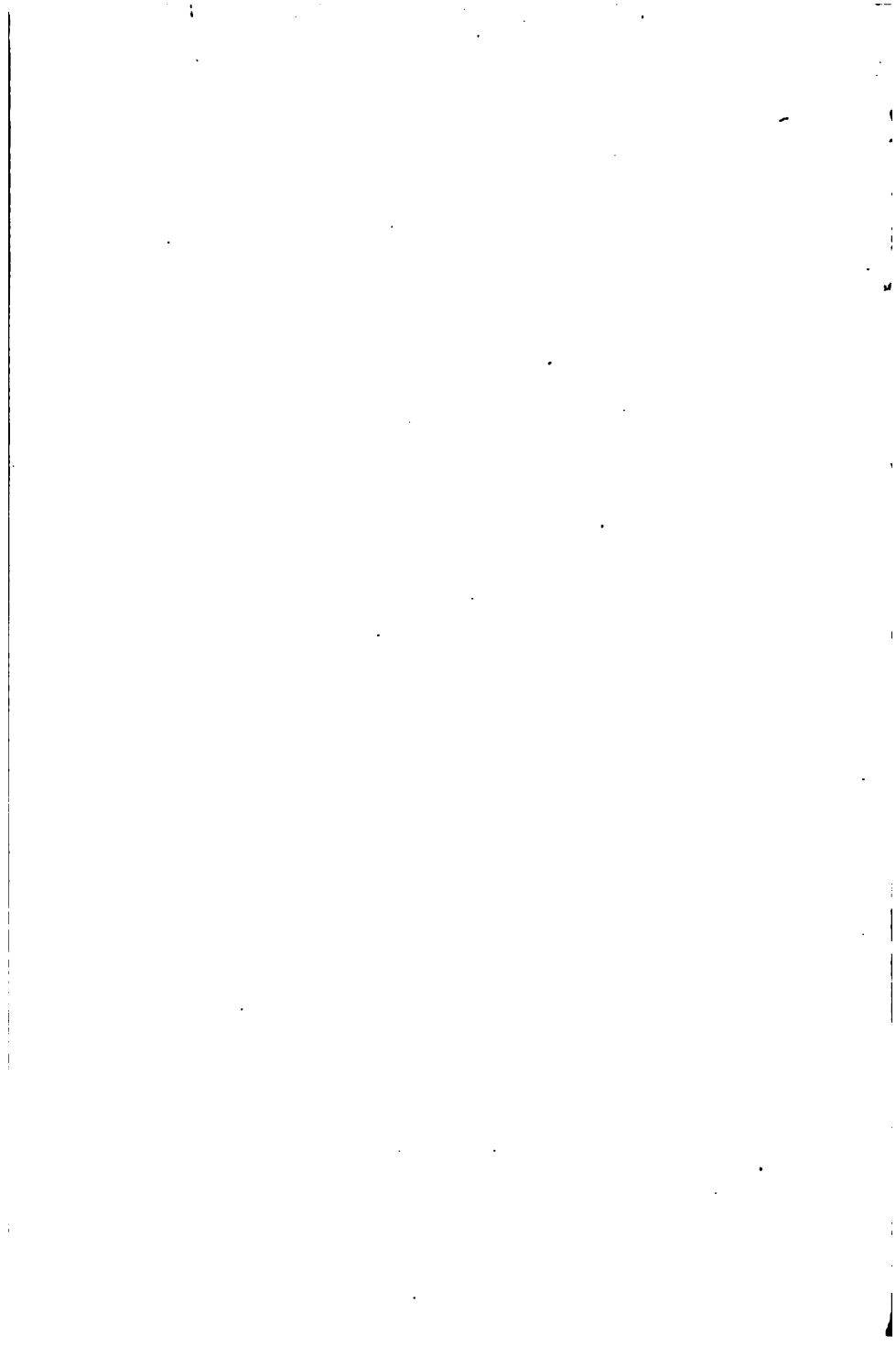
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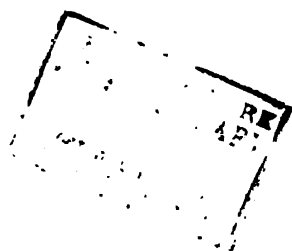






GOLF







**FRONT VIEW OF THE ADDRESS. THE HEAD SHOULD BE
TURNED SLIGHTLY AWAY.**

GOLF

FOR BEGINNERS AND OTHERS

BY

MARSHALL WHITLATCH

ILLUSTRATED



NEW YORK
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MCMX



Address To Heroes
Should Suffer Away.

GOLF ✓

FOR BEGINNERS—AND OTHERS

BY
MARSHALL WHITLATCH ✓

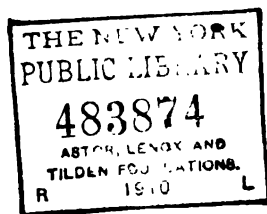
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ROY WEBB
JULY
1910

INTRODUCTION

"When I get very old and feeble and my joints creak and I begin to find croquet too strenuous a pastime, then I may take up golf." This was my answer to the first invitation I had to play this game. I felt that to ask me to take up a game suitable only for mollycoddles, as it then seemed to me, was asking too much; I, who had been intensely interested in athletic sports ever since I could remember—baseball, football, rowing and what not.

I can remember how my lip curled with disdain when I saw the red coats and knickerbockers.

It was up in Connecticut, a few miles below New Haven, at a summering place called Woodmont, that the above remarks were made, and it was to a young lady that they were addressed. However, I was inveigled into watching the game. We reached the first tee and she made a little mountain of sand about two inches high and

GOLF

asked me to get a ball out of the pocket of the bag. I did it rather awkwardly, as the whole outfit was strange and I wasn't interested. I remember how critically I viewed the old Silver-town gutty ball as I took it out of the bag and bounded it on the bottom of one of the clubs to see whether it was lively or not.

I handed it over and she put it on the mound of sand, which still further prejudiced me against the game and convinced me that there was no doubt of its being suitable for mollicoddles; why, they didn't even give the ball a chance. In baseball the ball had a look in; it took some skill to hit a ball in motion and still more if it had a curve and was coming fast.

She took out a driver—she explained that was the name of the club selected—and then began a still further preliminary course of action in the nature of trial swings, shifting of grip, gage of wind, light, humidity, and doubtless a hundred other things, till I was thoroughly disgusted. If they did all that in order to hit a miserable little white pill on a mound they were carrying the thing to absurdity.

INTRODUCTION

The young lady said nothing, but swung and hit the ball with a sharp clicking sound and we were off. The ball went about a hundred yards and had an inshoot. "Gee! see it curve!" I exclaimed, and then she said in answer to my criticism that the ball didn't go very far for all the trouble she had taken: "I have been off my drive for over a week and have been slicing right along, but that was rather a fair drive, and I'll wager a box of candy that you cannot do as well."

That was more than I could stand, and I took the candy against its equivalent in cigars. I took another ball out of the bag and asked if I could baby it up on a mound of sand as she had done. "Certainly." Well, I did. No foolish preliminaries for me. I swung at it with a force that would have sent a baseball over the outfield fence. My hat flew off, and I felt as though I had broken my collar-bone. My fingers tingled, and I was dizzy. Laughter brought me to myself, and glancing at the mound of sand I saw that white, clean ball still resting there. That roused all the fury in me. I hated that ball then, and I have yet a lingering suspicion of all balls,

GOLF

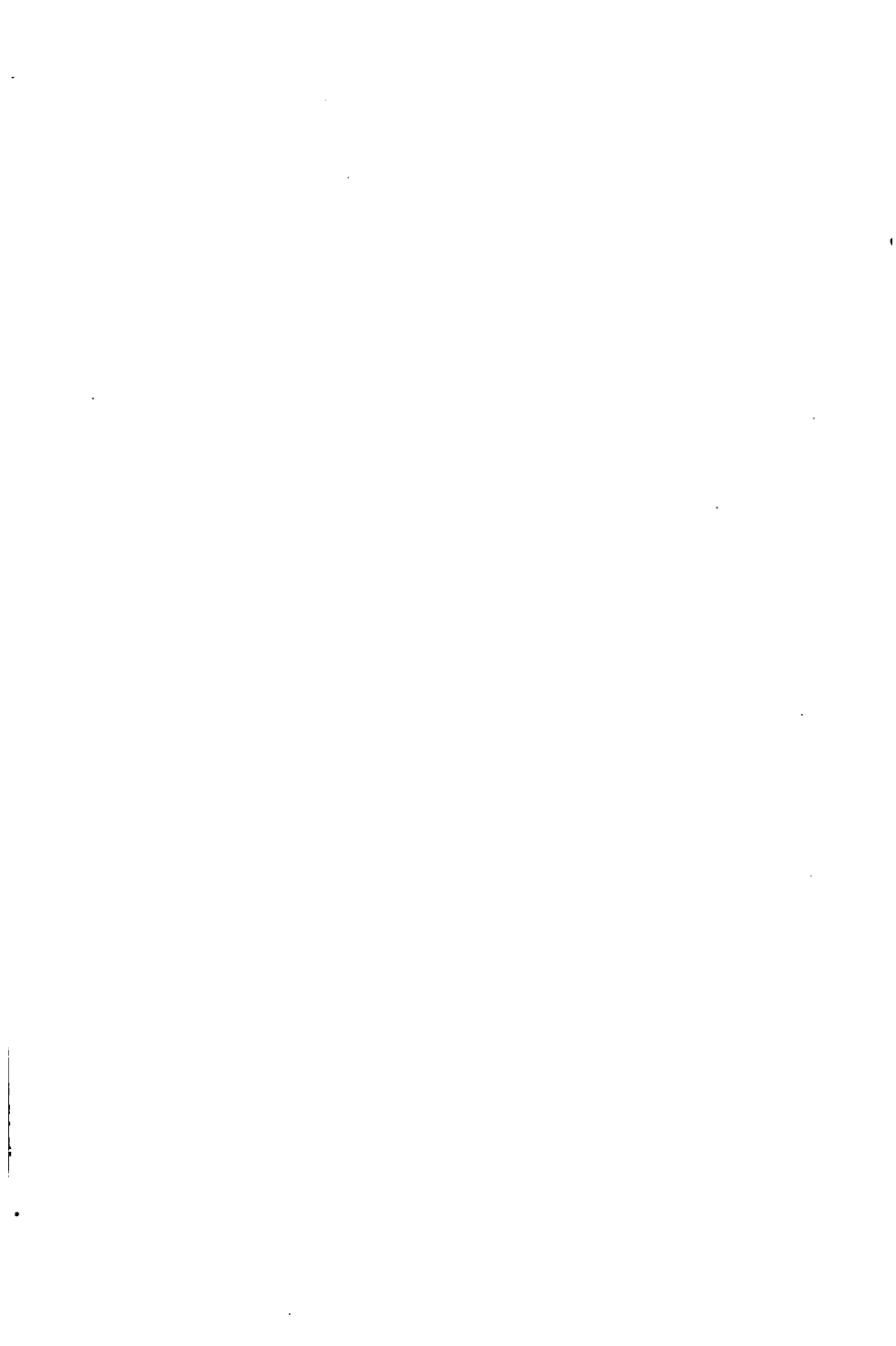
and am always on my guard in their presence. I had lost my bet, and the remark that "It isn't as easy as it looks" only added to my discomfiture.

Ha! thought I, it's a game of wits. I had better see how the trouble had happened, and I walked away from the ball, as she had done, and took a more cautious swing at a blade of grass. Missed that, too. Saw the trouble now, and hit the grass next time. Now I could hit the ball. I swung good and hard and reached for it and connected. That drive was my undoing. The feel of the club sinking through that ball and the way that ball traveled sent a thrill through me that I'll never forget.

That was ten years ago, and what time I could spare from business since has been spent on the links. Rain, snow, or sunshine, I have had more genuine pleasure at the game and met more fine fellows than at all other sports combined; I felt very far indeed from being a mollycoddle, and I think there are enough converts already to justify us in calling golf the national business men's game.

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**BALANCE THE FOUNDATION OF
GOLF**



GOLF

CHAPTER I

BALANCE THE FOUNDATION OF GOLF

GOLF hit me hard at the start. I had the fever as thoroughly as one could get it. I talked golf when I could and I dreamed golf when I could not talk it. Everyone I saw with a golf bag seemed a personal friend of mine.

I had only one day a week when I could play, as my business did not allow of any other time, but at odd moments I pored over Vardon's articles in the golfing papers and also Taylor's. Vardon was making his memorable trip through the country that year and I knew every wrinkle on his hand, as far as one could learn from photographs. I had only Vardon clubs, an enterprising maker having put out a line with his name

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on them. I bought all the papers which published golfing news and knew Vardon's every move. I marveled at his skill, as many a golfer has done.

If I could play golf but once a week, that didn't prevent my practicing at home—nearly every evening I went out in the kitchen after the maid had gone upstairs and I was at it. I had the photographs of great players on the kitchen table, and I was sure I was doing everything according to the book. I committed all the instructions for playing to memory and was dead certain I observed them all. Hour after hour I went through this practice, but when I got out on the links my finely-trained strokes wouldn't work. Mornings I would be beaten invariably. Afternoons I would give up form and get there any old way. I always did better afternoons.

During the following week when I got home at night from business I would start all over again to reconstruct my theories and develop form. Form was the only way to become a golfer. I made up my mind that I would cultivate the correct way to play if I never won a

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match. I persisted for over two years in this endeavor, with but a slight improvement in my game. The fellows I played with, who took up golf at the same time I did, were allowing me four and five strokes, and I was discouraged.

Finally I decided to discontinue trying to follow others and build up a method of my own, founded on sound mechanical principles. I was always a good mechanic, and the same application to my own ideas that I had given to others began to show in my play. My game steadied and my improvement was regular. I was on the same handicap basis as my friends in a few months, playing only when they did. In the fall I conceded three strokes to them. I have been improving ever since.

I really believe that the time spent in trying to copy any one's style or in any way trying to play imitatively is wasted. To be coached by a professional will sometimes help in calling attention to a fault which the player has unconsciously developed and to have him furnish suggestions which may tend to make the playing of certain shots easier I think is a good idea. In such cases

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go only to a first-rate player, and instead of having him stand by and watch you try to develop a swing or cultivate form in sixty minutes, get him to show you the principles or explain the less obvious shots such as playing out of long grass, sand, mud, and water. There is a knack about playing shots of this kind which it would take endless time to learn without help or a suggestion from some one who understands them.

In the case of young folks in their teens I consider that they have the imitative faculty so strong that if a really fine professional takes hold of them when they start he will make golfers of them. For the average person, however, I doubt if anything but playing the game itself will ever be of advantage. No two people will ever swing at a ball in the same way. Each one develops a different set of muscles, due to his environment, and a method of playing golf used by one man who has developed one set of muscles and is naturally strong in them would be of no value to another player who has not developed that set. Golf is essentially individual; let any one hit on a method of playing that will produce results and



TOP OF SWING FOR THE DRIVER OR BRASSEY.

NEW YORK
JAN 10 1941
GETA LINDA AND
TILDA TO BATH

THE FOUNDATION OF GOLF

become sufficiently skilful, immediately a new school is started.

The first step of all is to decide just what you want to do and refuse to be persuaded to change your method every time you find yourself off your game. It is my purpose in this book to call attention to those things which, no matter what your form or method may be, must be observed in making a stroke, as they are fundamental principles. Much confusion arises in the mind of a beginner from the endless list of instruction regarding the grip of the hands, the position of the feet, the position of the ball, and the style and weight of clubs, length of shafts, keeping the eye on the ball, following through, and what not. I have tried conscientiously to think of six or eight things at once in endeavoring to play a shot, and it cannot be done. It requires intense concentration for just an instant in golf to make a stroke successfully, and the thing to do is to determine just what you must concentrate on and stick to that.

My object in this chapter is to bring out what I consider the foundation of a stroke with any

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club, and that is the matter of balance. As any part of the stroke, no matter whether it is the grip of the hands, the turn of the wrists, or any of the details which compose a swing, is rendered of no value if the player loses his balance in the delivery of the stroke, I think no one can gainsay that balance or equilibrium, or center of gravity (call it what you will), is the more important. A stroke may be partly saved by a heroic effort sometimes, but no properly played stroke is ever made when the balance is not maintained throughout the swing.

To keep one's balance may seem simple enough, and the majority of golfers will say that they do. True, indeed, they do; they waste the majority of the effort of their swing in doing it. Comparatively little of the energy expended goes into the ball; most of it goes into a death grip on the club, one leg trying to maintain the balance which the other leg is trying to disturb, a stiffening of the arms, shoulders and countless other losses, and a wild endeavor as the club nears the ball to throw everything into it and get the ball away anyhow. When the ball is struck the

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instinctive effort is to restore the equilibrium by pulling in the arms in order to keep from falling over. Every beginner I ever saw had to be warned to go at it easier. Now if the experience of all good players agrees that this is so, be sensible and at least consider what they say. All golf wisdom boiled down will only teach you to "master yourself."

That is where golf is so peculiar. This is the real foundation of golf, but I despair of ever putting that clearly enough before any one to have him understand it, so I start with the matter of balance, presuming that it is useless at the outset to try to bring out the philosophy of golf. That will be learned in what some one has called "the seven years it takes to become a golfer."

Few experienced golfers will deny that a little energy well directed and smoothly applied will drive the ball farther than a more vigorous effort which does not connect the ball and the center of the club. The more easily the balance is preserved, the more freedom you will have for the making of the stroke. If you can devise some way of keeping your head in one spot, by that I

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mean not swaying the head, your eyes will be able to see the ball (the object to be struck) clearly. To illustrate what I mean by keeping the head in one spot:

You will remember that when you have your photograph taken in a gallery the photographer places a rest back of your head, with a couple of prongs on it, to keep your head from swaying to the right or left, or up and down. Your head occupies one spot or position with reference to the camera. If the man jars the camera so that it sways during the exposure of the plate the image will be blurred more than when you sway your head. Now, then, if your eye represents the camera and the ball the image, the more successful you become in keeping your head in one spot the better chance you have of seeing the ball clearly. No matter what method you use, this one thing must be mastered if you ever expect to play golf well. Certainly anything which tends to destroy your balance will make it impossible to see the ball clearly, and you cannot do this if your head moves from the spot you started from.

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You will find from experience that you cannot keep your head in one spot if you stiffen your muscles in any way. Keep your mind on keeping your head in one spot, as I have described, and you will correct a hundred errors into which you would otherwise drift. It will make you loosen up unconsciously. It will prevent you from making any sudden exertion which would tend to destroy your balance and thereby make your head sway. It will cause you to finish the stroke smoothly, naturally and easily, and thus prevent slicing, because you will not have to draw in your hands to restore your balance, as you will not lose it.

Regardless of how much you perfect your style, you cannot develop any method which will not require you to keep the head still so that you can see your ball clearly. It is worthy of notice that I have never seen any first-class player or even a good player who did not observe this fundamental principle, and there are endless methods of swinging at a ball. Jerome D. Travers told me on his return from the West after winning his first national championship,

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in answer to my question as to what particular thing he kept his mind on most during his matches, that he kept repeating to himself as he walked up to the ball at each shot, "Keep your head still," "Keep your head still." This convinced me that it was the most important thing to be observed, and I can say that my improvement was more rapid after I began to master this one item than as a result of all other details put together. Now when I make a poor shot I put my entire attention on the next stroke to keeping my head still, and I find it gives the desired result.

You cannot play "hard" and observe this fundamental rule. When you stand with your legs spread rigidly apart and the muscles braced for the effort of your stroke, you will find at the very first attempt to draw your club back from the ball that unless you relax the muscles your head will move. Stand in front of your mirror, or, if out-doors, stand so that your shadow is cast toward the ball in front of you, and you will find that the muscles all over the body, with the exception of those which hold the head in position,

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must be relaxed or you cannot keep the head still when you are making your stroke. Allow this fact to sink into your mind and absorb it thoroughly, and then you will find that many of your faults will disappear.

From the foregoing it is obvious that it will be next to impossible to introduce a jerk or a sudden violent effort into any part of the swing without disturbing the balance or moving the head. You cannot jerk the club away from the ball and keep the head still; you cannot swing back too far, or too short, or any way other than is natural to your particular physique. No two persons have the same frame or type of muscles or equal physical development, and it is useless to try to give any rule for these details. Work them out for yourself, but the keeping of the head in one position is the base upon which you must start, because that is the only way you can see the ball clearly.

If your head is still, you see your ball clearly and can not fail to turn your hands at the right instant. You will find that you can not grip your club in the wrong way without introducing

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at some point in the swing a factor which will disturb your balance and make your head sway. You can not keep your balance at the finish of your swing without following through correctly. If the player will keep in mind this very important fact, *and will govern his effort by his ability to keep his head still*, he will readily work out for himself ways and means for accomplishing the desired result, and I believe that the average business man with the average physique is as capable of first-class golf as any youngster if he can acquire the right mental foundation upon which to build. Golf is mostly mental and players improve more from a correct grasp of the fundamentals than they do from merely playing around the course.

I want to drive home the fact that this is absolutely essential. Even though in trying to do it players may find they go off their game temporarily, they should realize that they never will learn to play well unless they have the courage to persist in acquiring a method which their common sense should tell them is the only way they can be sure of hitting the ball accurately.

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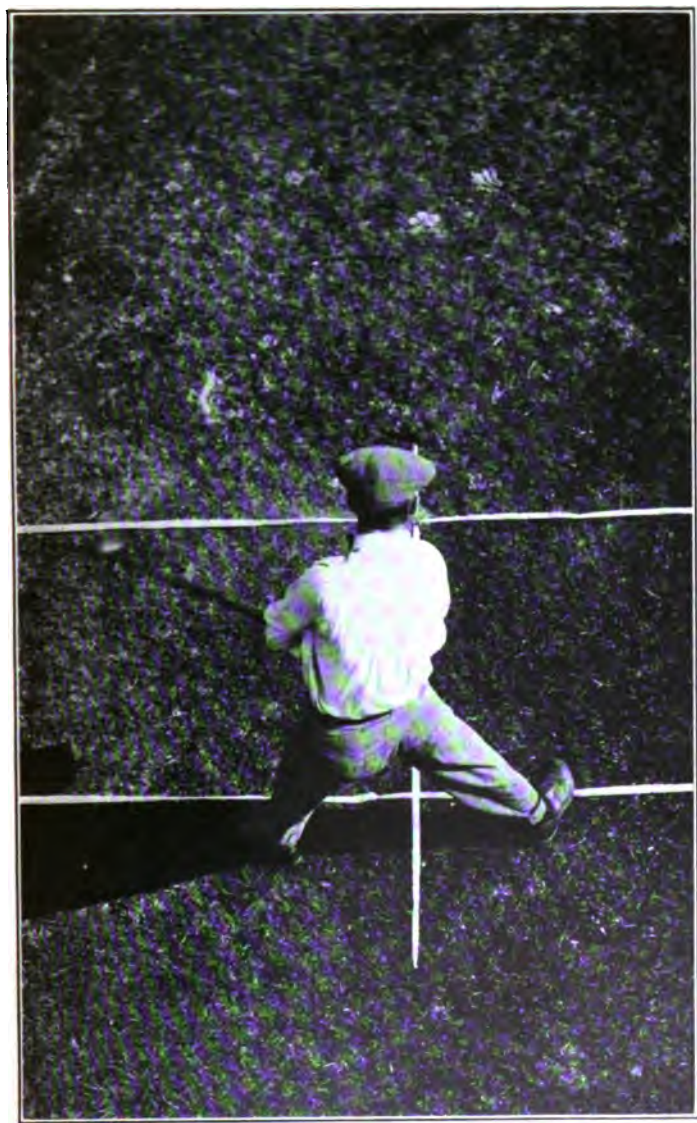
You need have no fears of overswinging if your mind is concentrated on your balance or the position of the head, as you cannot possibly overswing and keep it still. You cannot jerk your club away without altering the position of your head. You cannot introduce too much effort at any one point and be successful. It will govern the extent of your follow through. It will take the stiffness out of your swing, and one thing that it especially accomplishes is to give that smooth, even rhythm to the swing, which does the work. It will give you the fine finish, which offers the least chance for a slice or a pull. In fact, it is the cure-all of a host of golfing errors.

Don't think because I have called attention to this important fact that you will be able to accomplish it in a week. It can't put you off your game if you go at it patiently and easily. You will find it very difficult at first to keep your head absolutely still. Don't compromise with yourself when you begin to improve; keep at it and fix your mind on acquiring the knack thoroughly and you have laid the foundation for real first-class golf.

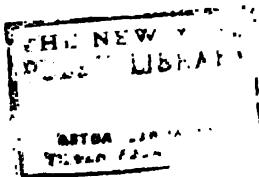
GOLF.

The great fault of all golfers, the root of all golfing errors, is the desire to swing hard. For the benefit of those who cannot master themselves sufficiently to swing easily and freely at the ball, I desire to make the following pertinent observation. The closer you bring your feet together the more you reduce your physical ability to swing hard. If you brace yourself, you are bound to use too much effort. Relax, and you will not. It is only the expert who can take a wide, open stance and swing easily.

It would seem a commonplace to say that it is far easier to maintain the balance on two legs than on one and yet most golfers fail to realize this and adapt the idea to their method. I desire to call especial attention to the fact that in trying to imitate a good player the vast majority of beginners seem to have an idea that he throws his weight first on the right leg and then on the left. In my opinion this idea or mental picture is one thing which makes for rigidity in the swing and right from the start seriously handicaps the player in his effort to develop a correct swing; as the majority of people go along the



FOLLOWING THROUGH IN THE DRIVE.



THE FOUNDATION OF GOLF

lines of least resistance they never develop the proper way.

I know that to the uninitiated a good player seems to make such a shift of weight from one leg to another, but he really does not. If he did his head would move. It would have to move. His head stays still and his body moves, but the center of gravity remains in the same place, constant. I think it is the idea of most beginners when they are told to shift their weight that they must shift the center of gravity; I know that is what I understood. So long as you have both feet on the ground in approximately the same position as when you start and you keep your head still, you will not change your center of gravity. The speed of the club is gained purely from a twist of the body and any method which depends upon a shifting of the weight or center of gravity (call it what you will) is to my mind extremely hazardous and unreliable.

If I am correct in my statement that the weight or center of gravity should not change, the whole scheme can be simplified by studying out some

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way of acquiring speed and power by the twist of the body and shoulders. It being evident that the feet or foundation must be kept in approximately the same position from start to finish in order to maintain the center of gravity constant, as in that way only can the head be kept still, the next step is to find out how you can exert the greatest muscular force to advantage while making your club travel along the line you desire to send the ball.

In the photograph showing the position immediately after striking the ball it is apparent that the legs play but little part in my stroke after I reach my ball and yet at the top of my swing, which you can see by reference to another illustration, you will observe that they have every appearance of exerting considerable power. They do, but it is very slowly applied, because the body should not return to the position assumed in the address until the club head reaches the ball, and that takes more time than players realize. Jumping at the ball destroys the whole foundation of the position held by the body with reference to the ball, and a sudden or extra effort

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made with either leg, or both, will cause your head to move so that you do not see the ball clearly and you change the position of the pivotal center with relation to the ball.

The speed with which, as well as the manner in which, you can utilize the power of the legs will be governed by your ability to keep the head absolutely still. In my own case I find that I am not conscious of any effort made with the legs at all; apparently I use them principally to keep the tilt of the body constant. At any rate, it is plain from the photograph that my weight is well supported on the flat of my feet when I connect with the ball, and as in boxing, a blow delivered with the weight firmly planted on both feet has the greater power.

By observing the left arm you will see that it is in line with the club shaft. That should be evidence that the left arm is not applying power but is merely guiding the club. It will be seen from the photograph also that my head is still pointed at the spot upon which the ball rested, and I keep it there in order that the pivotal center will remain constant until the ball has left the

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club head. I then look up to see where my ball goes, and not before.

Many players keep their heads still until the instant before they connect with their ball and then they relax to get a heave which spoils the whole thing. When you connect properly with your ball with your head perfectly still there should be a total lack of the feeling of power, as everything should go into the ball and not to disturbing the frame. Everything is so smooth when you go through your ball properly that you are conscious of very little effort.

These two facts mastered thoroughly will do much to start you with a correct foundation upon which to develop a good game. The ability to hit the ball at all depends upon your being able to see what you are striking at and applying the power in a straight line during the time the club head is in contact with the ball is what governs your direction.

**GETTING THE POWER INTO
THE BALL**

CHAPTER II

GETTING THE POWER INTO THE BALL

WHEN you have learned how to hit the ball, the next thing in order is the amount of energy or power you can apply to it. It is only the energy which is transmitted to the ball that counts. Let us then examine the different facts which confront us and determine their relative importance.

In the first place we must remember that it is necessary to maintain the balance or the head will move so that we cannot see the ball clearly. The next is that as the face of the club is to be connected with the ball in a straight line we must endeavor in starting our swing to do nothing which will prevent our bringing the club back to the ball in the same way. The natural tendency of the beginner is to brace himself for the effort. Every one knows that the beginner does not play good golf. His method must be wrong then.

GOLF

He is too stiff. It takes most golfers years to learn this simple fact, and they always have a lingering tendency to stiffen up. I know golfers who set themselves rigidly to start and unbend one muscle at a time till they have thought out each individual step in the process. They remind one of a mechanical toy playing golf.

If you will take a club in your hand and start your back swing easily and naturally, directing your attention to observing when your head starts to sway, you will find that it happens at the instant when you stiffen a single muscle. The slightest tendency to stiffen will instantly destroy the balance. It is well worth your while to convince yourself that this is so.

Many players can make a perfect practice swing, and yet the moment the ball is in front of them they swing in an entirely different manner. This is because in the trial swing the eye has no responsibility and the player allows the club to go where it will. The eye should observe in golf and not direct the lines of force or angles. In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred beginners unconsciously try to bring the lines along which

GETTING THE POWER

the power is applied into the visible angles as interpreted by the eyes. In other words, the player is trying to see and direct everything as though he were shooting a rifle.

It takes a number of years in golf to learn to "shoot from the hips" or waist, so to speak. The vast majority of beginners are up on their toes in applying the power, instead of being well down on the flat of the foot with the weight well grounded. This desire to "aim" at the ball along the shaft is the worst fault and the hardest to change or cure in the older players. It is not so much their age or muscular equipment which is at fault, but their lack of adaptability and doggedness in holding to their own way of playing. They assume at the start that they cannot get a long ball, and promptly devise ways and means to absolutely prevent their doing it.

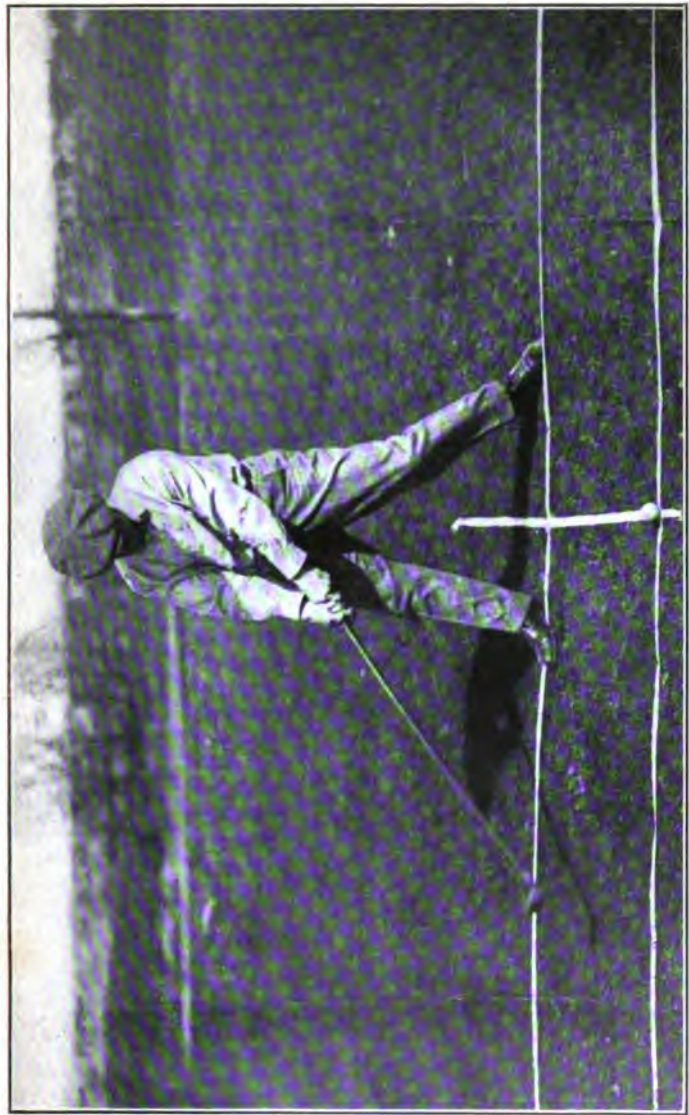
A lack of flexibility is a part of their natural equipment, but it should be their endeavor to overcome this handicap and not to intensify it. They start with a lack of distance with the inevitable result that they get into trouble; then they acquire the habit of trying to lift the ball

GOLF

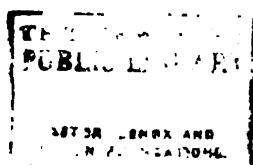
over the trouble by hitting up instead of trying to get more distance. This results in a very high percentage of topped shots.

The trouble with these older players is never lack of care, because they are a painstaking lot, but a lack of understanding of the principles of the stroke. They start by reaching out farther than the younger man as a rule, making it more difficult to maintain the balance and requiring considerable muscular effort to keep their feet when they swing. This eliminates the compactness which comes from one set of muscles supporting the other. Then they lower their heads to get a better aim along the shaft, thus bringing more directly in the line of vision a lot of moving objects, which tends to distract the attention when they are on their downward swing.

Instead of reaching the top of the swing comfortably they expend most of their energy in keeping their balance, and in the great majority of cases they make all their effort in one violent heave as they reach the ball. The eyes are about a foot above the real pivotal center of the stroke, and consequently everything should appear more



IN THE LOWER PART OF THE SWING THE CLUB HEAD IS MOVING IN A VERY FLAT ARC.



GETTING THE POWER

or less flat to the player in a properly played stroke. In other words, the base or pivot of the stroke should really appear to be behind him and not in a line between the eyes and the ball.

The player must depend more upon the "feel" of the shot; that is to say, his sense of touch must be cultivated more, and he must depend upon his vision rather as a check on the "feel" of the shot than as a guide to making it. Constant practice will give a player this "feel" of the shot, while observation will show him how to make his allowances for the way the shot looks, or the angles appear, when a shot is properly played. In a later chapter I show the stance or address I use on the drive, and while it looks wrong, I know from experience that it "feels right" and is right. I have proved it. I have learned to be guided more by the "feel" than by the "view."

I think it is the constant antagonism between the eyes and the sense of touch, or feeling, which is influencing the reason which causes the conscious muscular control and holds back the instinctive or natural muscular action, thereby increasing the difficulty of falling naturally into

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the stroke. In practical language this means that it will be far more profitable for the average golfer to observe the simple formula of keeping his head still and making his club head go along a straight line while in contact with the ball than to try to work out all the difficult angles and confusing details in the making of a stroke. These two simple rules will fill the bill if they are given a chance.

LOOKING AT THE BALL



CHAPTER III

LOOKING AT THE BALL

WE now come to the point of supreme importance in golf, and that is looking at the ball. I presume that my statement that there is perhaps one golfer in a hundred who knows how to look at a ball, will cause many smiles, yet that is an exact fact. About one golfer in ten stands perfectly still in addressing his ball and really concentrates his attention on seeing the ball clearly. Most of the time is spent in a hasty glance in the direction it is proposed to drive and back again to the ball, before focusing the eyes on that point. The club is being waggled over the ball with the head swaying as the weight is seesawed from one leg to the other and then before the eyes have been able to focus clearly upon the ball the attempt is made to hit it.

Golfers as a rule are superficial and too com-

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placent to come to a realizing sense of their faults. They really believe that they do not need to be told so simple a thing as to stand still and look at their ball steadily and clearly in order that they can see it properly, and yet the number who can do that is mighty small. The instant you shift your gaze on the ball during any part of the swing, that instant you invite disaster. More golfers hit their ball in spite of, and not because of, the way they look at it than is realized.

It is purely a lack of concentration that is responsible for most golfing errors, and it is of the very greatest importance that, as the mind can concentrate upon but one thing at a time, it should be the most important thing to which you devote your entire ability. I have shown that to be keeping the head still. In that way only can you look at the ball properly. In that way only can you see the ball clearly. The only time when you are really accomplishing that is when you can see the ball at every point in your swing, from start to finish, clearly.

I have repeated some of my remarks, especially

LOOKING AT THE BALL

that about keeping the head still, very often, and I might as well say here that it is the beginners I am aiming at. If they can really grasp this fact at the start, a year or two with even a small amount of practice will enable them to catch up with those who have started a year and two years before them who do not observe it. The tendency of most golfers is to drift into this habit or that, generally a compromise, due to the fact that it is not easy to accomplish a certain definite thing. For instance, if a player misses or tops or sclaffs a ball two or three times running, he immediately commences to hit at it harder and harder in the effort to get it away, instead of acknowledging his lack of care and skill in not hitting accurately and devoting his attention to a clearer view of his ball on the next shot and a less violent effort for distance.

In looking at my ball I know, of course, from experience, what line my club will travel along, and when I start out for an afternoon's play I take a trial swing or two to see what my line is; then I have the line fixed in my mind. I know from experience where the ball will go if I hit

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it accurately. Before I draw my club away from the ball I turn my head very slightly by moving my chin to the right a couple of inches, while the top of the head inclines to the left. I do this for a variety of reasons. The first and most important is that it makes my head the last thing I have my mind on in starting my swing. The second is that it gives me more room for my left shoulder at the top of my swing, and there is no chance of the shoulder touching my chin suddenly, thereby jarring my head and disturbing my view of the ball. The third reason is that it inclines the bulk of the weight of the head to the left, and as the head is very heavy it requires a little tension on the neck muscles to hold it in that position, and this tension retards any tendency to look away from the ball too soon. The fourth is that at the top of the swing the head is more nearly in the same position with reference to the shoulders as in addressing the ball and it relieves any stiffness and adds comfort to the position of the shoulders at this point. The fifth is that it brings the eyes to the upper left hand corner of their orbit, and is the limit beyond which they

LOOKING AT THE BALL

cannot go even if anxiety to see where the ball is going should make the player want to look up. It is the best preventive measure I know.

If the player has a fixed determination in his mind that from the top of his swing until he reaches the ball he will see his ball clearly it will effectually cure him of the faults of "hitting too soon" and "looking up too soon," the two worst faults in golf, because they involve a missed or topped or sclaffed ball. Slicing is a fault which can be allowed for, but a missed or topped or sclaffed ball will effectually put you out of the running.

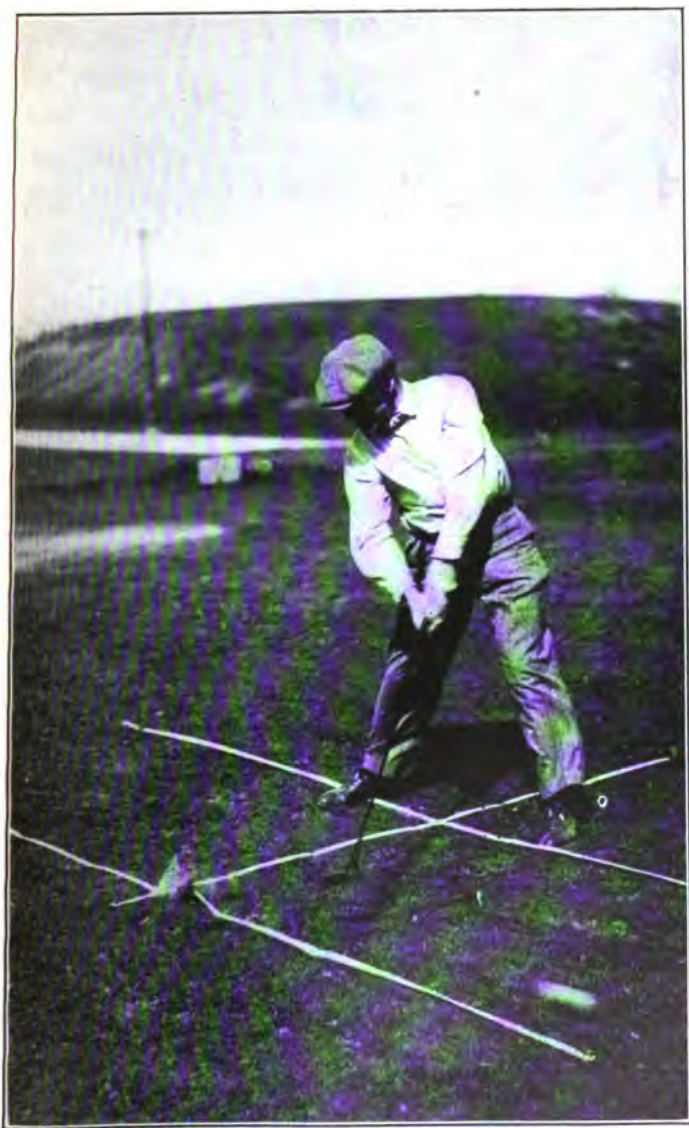
Fundamental in this matter of looking at the ball is its effect upon the confidence with which you play. Lack of confidence in golf is of many kinds, and it takes a long time to break oneself of the habit, for it is a habit. It is bred in the early stages and comes from sound causes, the chief of which is that you do not see the ball clearly. Naturally when you swing you are trusting to a very large extent to good fortune in connecting with the ball. When your game is based upon any other foundation than that of see-

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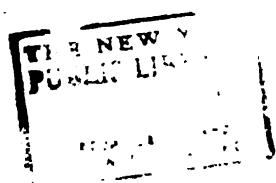
ing your ball clearly, practice may make you more hopeful, and it is well to be optimistic in golf, but your confidence will vanish in a flash if you swing with care and yet miss your shot in an important match. On the other hand, if you have learned to keep your head still and look at the ball when you make your stroke, you will have developed a confidence in yourself, which is properly founded, and nothing that your opponent can bring off will destroy your belief that you can match his shot and perhaps go him one better.

You may be ever so nervous and eager to win your match, yet if you have the ability to concentrate upon the one idea of seeing that ball clearly throughout the swing until your club reaches it, your confidence in yourself will remain unshaken and you will be bringing off your shots even though your knees are quivering with nervousness.

Take two players of equal ability, one with plenty of tournament experience and the other without, and the chances are much in favor of the player of experience, simply because the lessons he has learned have been driven home harder.



THE BLURRED IMAGE OF THE BALL SHOWS THAT IT DOES NOT RISE AT A VERY ACUTE ANGLE. (SEE PAGE 73.)



LOOKING AT THE BALL

He knows from experience that anxiety to see the result of his shot has caused him to look up too soon and he is on his guard, while the other player has not had the lesson driven home by such a failure at a critical moment.

The bulk of golfers I have met are successful business men, and I think they will average pretty much alike in their capacity to master themselves, but the difficulty is in properly impressing them with the importance of the fundamental principles. My experience is that the majority become bewildered in the maze of instructions they hear as to the playing of the game and they lose their sense of proportion, or that sense becomes dulled and their minds are concentrated upon the wrong thing. I don't care at what stage of the game a golfer may be, if he will limit his effort to his ability to see that ball clearly until he connects with it he will get his stroke away in pretty fair shape, and the first and most elementary thing in golf is to hit the ball.

Every course is one mass of temptation and pitfalls for the unwary and every hole presents a new feature to take his mind from the essential

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thing in golf, and that is that he must see his ball clearly to hit it accurately.

Every kind of a lie on the links is a temptation to divert the mind from the essential thing. No matter how badly your ball may be cupped, or in long grass, or on a down slope, or up slope, or with hazards in front of you, or around you, this one thing is the supreme factor in getting the ball away. Your opponent, lying dead to the hole, is the supreme temptation of all, but when you have once mastered the lesson of seeing your own ball clearly until you hit it, you will be able to smile to yourself when you walk up to your ball and say, "If you think that will make me look up, just wait." Mastery of this one item will pull many a hole "out of the fire" and save many a match which looks pretty desperate.

THE FOLLOW THROUGH



CHAPTER IV

THE FOLLOW THROUGH

SOME years ago when I was an oarsman I learned that the arms have not a great amount of strength. The real strength of the body is in the heavy muscles of the shoulders, back, and thighs. In rowing, the arms merely guide the oars and move them in and out of the water. One of the first things a novice learns in rowing is that his arms are not much use for power. They tire too quickly. You cannot time the grip on the water properly if you use your arms to pull.

The same thing is true of golf. It is the heavy muscles which do the real work. The arms should merely guide the club; not exert the power. Notice the criticism of the professional, "Get your back into it." Most beginners try to do all the work with their arms. If they had any such work

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to do as in rowing the arms would tire so quickly, that they would be glad to shift the burden of the work to the muscles best able to stand it. There's the rub. They don't tire, and the consequence is that it takes years to learn to put the shoulders, back, and thighs into the stroke. That is what gives the distance. That is what takes the load from the arms and enables them to merely direct the power. The arms propelling the club and trying to pull the body around remind one of the "tail wagging the dog." The principle is wrong. The arms sweeping through the swing without the powerful muscles giving substance to the stroke prevent the various factors composing the swing from synchronizing.

If, therefore, the player will realize where his greatest power lies he will be in a fair way to develop his method upon sound theories. It will enable him to avoid the spiteful, vicious jerk to get the ball away and rely more upon the steady, powerful sweep of the club to give him his distance. There should be in the player's mind no desire or intention of "swatting" the ball; merely connect and keep up a steady, firm pressure.

THE FOLLOW THROUGH

You can then begin to press more firmly against the ball in order to keep the club head in contact with it for a longer time and this will not only increase your distance, but smooth out your whole stroke. There are very few players who do not have ample speed, but they fail to keep the pressure steadily against the ball until it rebounds from the club head.

Many players have observed the fact that they can swing beautifully at the ground when they have no ball there, and yet they make a mess of the stroke when they attempt to strike the ball. Ninety times out of a hundred the practice swing is wrong for it is hard to tell when you are swinging correctly if you do not hit a ball. The ball shows how correctly you really do swing. As a general rule a practice swing is decidedly misleading and is very apt to put you off as you accustom yourself to swinging with no opposition and the balance is entirely different. As the club goes through the air so fast, meeting with no resistance, it throws the timing of the effort off because the stroke is finished so much more quickly with no ball there. The player attempts, when he

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swings at the ball, to get the same timing and it cannot be done. When the club head meets the ball there is a tremendous amount of drag applied to the speed of the swing, far more than is realized, and the habit of swinging hard is a great handicap. I know I took twenty-seven practice swings playing one hole in a match once and did not realize it until an enterprising reporter called my attention to it after the match. I have learned since and seldom take a practice swing now and when I do I swing very slowly.

If your club was so heavy that it took your entire ability to swing it merely, you would depend principally upon the weight of the club to do the work of propelling the ball forward and would be satisfied to devote your entire attention to striking it accurately. If the ball was made of lead and was a little larger you would find that the shaft of your club would break because the weight of the club would not be sufficient to get the ball away quickly enough to transmit the strain from the shaft, and something would have to give. The ball would not give; it would be the shaft. The reason that the shaft does not

THE FOLLOW THROUGH

break when you hit your ball is that unlike a leaden or iron ball your ball is made of rubber which is very elastic and yielding, much more so than the club head, and so the strain is taken up by the ball.

Now the first effect of the blow is to transmit much energy to the ball, which is compressed partly and propelled forward partly, and if the power is not kept up or "followed through," as the saying is, the amount of power in the blow which made the ball collapse would be lost because the ball would spring back into shape again as soon as the club head ceased to be against it. But if the power is "followed through" properly so that the club head is still going forward and against the ball while the latter is springing back into shape a very considerable impetus is added.

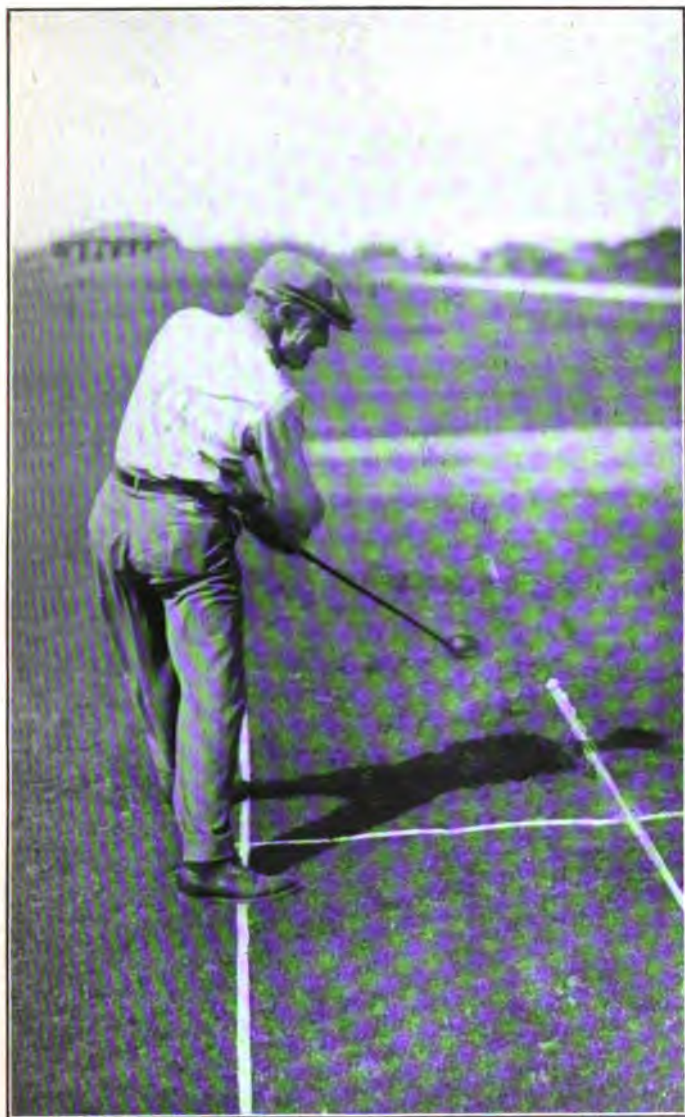
To illustrate the point of the spring back or rebound of the ball: if you were to throw the ball against a blanket hung on a line, the blanket would yield and the ball would drop straight down. If you were to stand a board up and throw the ball against it, the ball would rebound from it because the ball would be compressed and

GOLF.

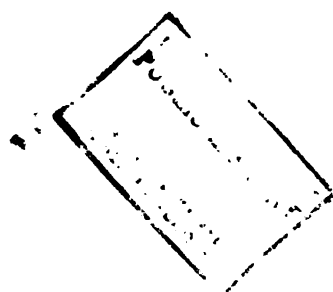
would rebound from the board with as much speed as was used in compressing it less the amount of energy which the board took up. If you throw the ball against a stone wall it will spring back with great speed because the wall holds its position so firmly that practically all the energy which is used in making the ball collapse is returned in the ball upon the rebound.

It is this principle which is lost sight of by most golfers. In order to get this rebound of the ball from the club head the power must be kept up and the club head pressed steadily against the ball until the latter has regained its shape; it is the firmness with which the pressure is maintained rather than any heave or jerk to the swing which gives the distance.

I consider that this elementary principle should be thoroughly understood, as it is this part of the game which is spoken of as "mental." A correct understanding of these basic principles has much to do with the way the player swings at his ball, and the fact that beginners do not "follow through" is proof that they do not understand this fact or their common sense would make them



THE POSITION OF THE HANDS SHOWS HOW LONG THE EFFORT IS CONTINUED TO KEEP THE CLUB HEAD AGAINST THE BALL.



THE FOLLOW THROUGH

observe it. If they grasp the idea correctly as I have shown, their own intelligence will insist on their maintaining a firm, steady pressure on the ball after the first impact.

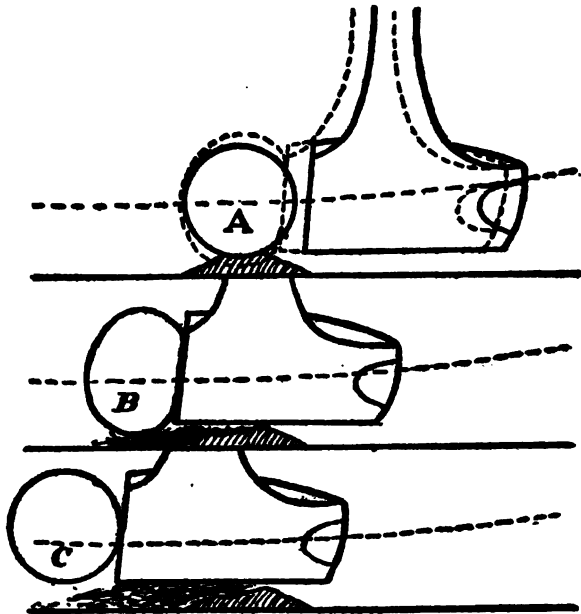
It is the player's mental conception of his stroke that is responsible for his way of playing, and that is something which he alone knows and which dictates his style. I have always hesitated to say anything a player does is wrong until I find out what his idea is in doing it. He may be making a very intelligent effort to play his stroke according to his understanding. If he is violating some basic principle the cure will not be found in making him swing differently, but in changing his mental picture of the stroke. If he can explain his purpose in swinging so and so, then I can grasp his idea, and if he is wrong show him why.

In my own case I have found that my improvement has come more from correcting wrong theories of the stroke than from practicing on false premises. The theories of golf are not so difficult that any man of average sense cannot understand them. One does not need to be an engineer to grasp the idea of the rebound of a rubber ball,

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or that his head must be still to see a ball clearly.

In order to bring out what takes place while the ball is in contact with the club head I have provided a diagram. The ball is shown in posi-



tion A immediately before the club head reaches it in solid lines. The dotted lines show the club head in contact and at the point of greatest compression. In position B it is shown in a collapsed condition, the driver forward from the tee about

THE FOLLOW THROUGH

half the width of the club head. It has taken considerable force to compress the ball, and this force will react the instant the ball starts from the tee, and as the shaft of the club has yielded to the blow, it will begin to straighten out as soon as the ball gains headway. This keeps the club head against the ball while the ball is returning to shape again.

The instant the ball regains its shape, as shown in position C, it leaves the club head sharply, without any additional contact of any kind, because it will at that instant travel with the speed of the club head plus the additional speed added by the spring back of the shaft and the rebound from being compressed. In other words, it will be traveling forward the instant it passes position C faster than the club head is traveling.

If you will chalk the face of your driver and hit the ball clean you will find that it will leave the imprint of the bramble on the face about the size of a quarter. This proves it must collapse. If it collapses it must rebound. As the club head was traveling very fast when it first compressed the ball the rebound must be very rapid.

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In order to get the full benefit of the rebound you must have the face of the club in contact with the ball.

The first effect of meeting the ball is to bend the shaft because the head of the club is delayed by the contact. The shaft will stay bent, if the power is applied steadily, until the strength of the shaft has overcome the drag of the ball and straightens out again. This should make it feel, when the ball is correctly struck, as though the ball and club head were in contact for a couple of feet. The more limber the shaft the longer this contact seems to last.

I have found from my own experience that I get an equally long ball with a "whippy" shaft and with a stiff one. I prefer a stiff shaft because it wears longer, on account of the greater amount of wood in it, but I think that older players and those who do not naturally have a rapid swing should use the "whippy" shaft because their slower swing is transmitted into speed by the whippy shaft when they maintain a steady pressure against the ball. A stiffer shaft

THE FOLLOW THROUGH

moving slower will not keep the club head against the ball so well.

These details, however, are refinements of the game and I suggest that the beginner give but little attention to them.

If you apply all the power you are capable of before you connect with your ball you will lose a great deal of the rebound. Grasp this idea thoroughly and you will find it will take care of the "timing" of the stroke. The next time you go out to play just think of this matter of applying your greatest effort after hitting the ball and it will astonish you how many things it will smooth out in your stroke, as well as the amount of distance you can obtain. It was undoubtedly the discovery of this fact that changed James Braid, the famous Scotch professional, from a very ordinary driver to one of the longest drivers in the world.



FUNDAMENTALS OF THE SWING

CHAPTER V

FUNDAMENTALS OF THE SWING

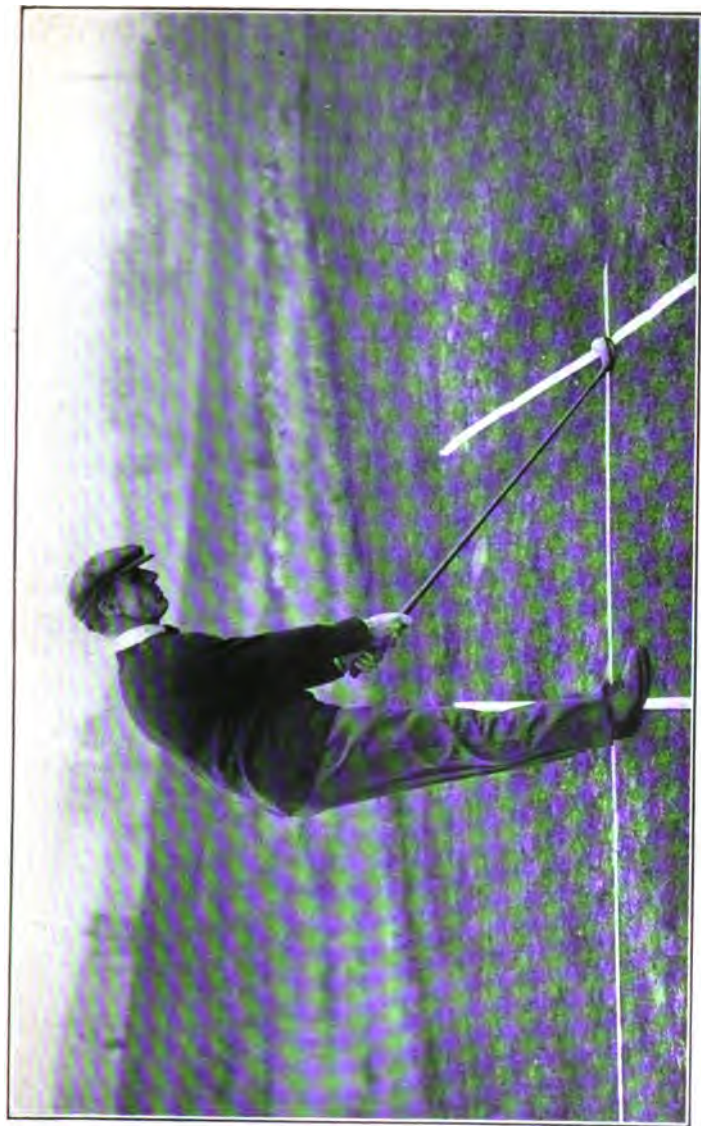
THERE are two circles or sweeps which, merged together, form the swing. One is imparted by the twist of the body (I call that the horizontal sweep) and the other is imparted by the arms lifting the club up over the right shoulder; this I call the vertical sweep. I desire to call the player's attention to a few facts concerning them which may be a guide in understanding the functions of each.

These two forces are the most important items in the stroke, and the mechanical problem they offer requires some nice calculation to work out properly in the player's mind. To begin with, I do not consider that many players realize the importance of the bearing of these two distinct forces upon the swing, and what the function of each is. As our pivot or center must remain

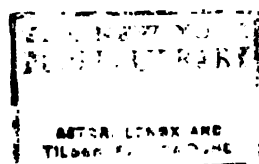
GOLF

fixed in order that we may be able to see the ball clearly, as well as to have that pivot remain constant with reference to its distance from the ball, we must remember that the pivot is located between the shoulders, as it is through the shoulders and arms that the power is immediately transferred to the club.

We will now consider the vertical swing or circle, for that is the one which causes the greatest amount of trouble to players, as it is the preponderance of it which results in pulling in the hands. To make this point perfectly clear I suggest that you try the following experiment: Address the ball in your usual manner and eliminate everything which does not pertain to a vertical swing in making your stroke; that is to say, every item which has anything in the nature of a horizontal or parallel-with-the-ground movement. You will find that you will merely raise your club up over your head and bring it down again. If you will notice carefully you will observe that in order to keep from slapping the ground you will have to draw in your hands. You will observe that the club head goes out

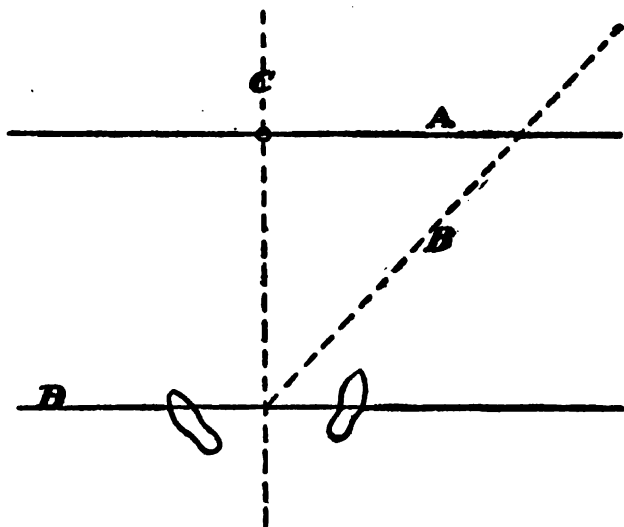


**SIDE VIEW OF THE ADDRESS. NOTE HOW LOW THE HANDS ARE HELD.
AND ALSO THE INCLINE OF BODY. (SEE PAGE 106).**



FUNDAMENTALS OF THE SWING

beyond the ball as you raise your club away from the ground, and you will also observe, on your downward swing, that the vertical sweep is making your club cut the line along which you



wish to send the ball, at right angles. To complete the vertical circle or swing you have to draw in your hands.

As you are always drawing in your hands when you get a slice it is evident that the vertical swing has been delayed too long and is

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predominating as you are nearing your ball.

I have made a diagram for the purpose of illustration. Line A is the line along which it is desired to send the ball. By line B, I represent the dividing line which should govern the time of application of the two forces, the horizontal imparted by the twist of the body and the vertical imparted by the sweep of the arms in raising and lowering the club from the ground.

From experience I have found that those players who do not practically complete their downward sweep before they reach line B have trouble with slicing because the force being applied to bring the club head down to the ball in time is greater than that which is twisting the body around. The consequence is that there is more force being applied vertically than horizontally, and they must pull in the hands to hit the ball at all. The majority of beginners start their vertical swing too quickly in order to get the club up over their heads, and this results in their predisposing their minds in favor of finishing the vertical part of the swing last. A sliced ball is inevitable under these circumstances.

FUNDAMENTALS OF THE SWING

There seems to be a peculiar construction of the mind which makes players return to the ball in the same way that they draw back from it, and if a step in the back swing is in its wrong order, that order will prevail on the downward swing. Any fault which is developed in the back swing is intensified on the downward swing because you are applying your maximum power at that time.

The clubs are built to give the ball the proper angle of rise when you are swinging parallel with the ground. What a very small percentage of players get off a fine, low ball when they hit it! The majority seem to devote great care to getting their ball high in the air. In fact, I think that one of the commonest faults I see on the links is that of trying to get the ball up.

Habits are easily developed in golf and hard to break. Every one will occasionally get a ball off right, but it is the average that counts. A great many of the experienced players will feel that they do not need to have their attention directed to this point, but if they were to get a strong sense of this fact they would be able to

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add very materially to their distance and accuracy. For instance, if you will make the attempt to get off an unusually high drive you will find it will have a slice nine times out of ten. It is almost impossible to avoid it.

As this point is one of the fundamental principles in golf I think it would be well for all players to consider carefully when they go off on a certain club to stop and see whether they are not trying to do the lifting instead of letting the club do the work. I know that in my own case it is one of the first things I think of when the suggestion of a slice appears in any of my shots.

If players will give this serious attention they will find that it will be of the very greatest help to them in curing many of their troubles.

The most prevalent cause of topped iron shots is not looking up, as most every one will tell you, but is the mental desire to get the ball up. With a desire to lift the ball, and not to leave that to the club which was built to do it, the player will unconsciously shift his pivotal center to the right of the ball, and in his downward swing the effort to avoid hitting the ground is

FUNDAMENTALS OF THE SWING

bound to make him top in the majority of cases.

The instant you shift the pivotal center your eye is the watchful guide which shows you your mistake, and it is practically impossible to avoid topping. If you have had the habit long enough you may have been able to make enough allowance for it in order to hit the ball, but you will be bound to get a slice, even if you don't top.

When you realize what a small percentage of players really get good iron shots it may strike home if you will really try to take a fresh gage of your ball the next time you go out to play and see how low you can send your ball and how clear on the center of the club you can connect with it. This will probably do more to correct slicing with irons than anything I know of, and it applies equally to the wooden shots.

In the photograph opposite page 48 will be seen a blurred image of the ball above the line of flight and to the right of the picture; you can see that it does not start off at a very acute angle. A perfectly hit ball with a driver should never rise over twenty to twenty-five feet above the ground, and on the average course with such a

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drive you get about thirty to fifty yards roll, while the ball which goes high is not only at the mercy of the wind, but will be liable to kick off to the right or left very badly on rough ground.

ACCURACY—NOT DISTANCE

CHAPTER VI

ACCURACY—NOT DISTANCE

THE two great faults of the majority of players are "hitting too soon" and "looking up too soon." The majority of professionals will tell you this. Now looking up is inevitable, and I always do it to see where my ball goes, but as I have not made my effort too soon I have applied the limit of my power to the stroke before I have any desire to look up. Those players who apply the power too soon cannot help looking up too soon.

When you stop to consider the difference between the good players and poor players you will quickly see that it is more in accuracy than in power. A well-made stroke conveys the idea of great power, and immediately the inexperienced makes a more violent effort to duplicate the distance of the good player. I do not hesitate to

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say that the vast majority of golfers expend more energy than they can control accurately. I know from experience that I have never yet taken out a friend to initiate into this game that he did not use twice as much energy as I did, and yet I always use the limit to which I can go and control it. Yet in spite of this statement, when I direct the player's attention to the fact that he is using more power than it is possible to control, he keeps on making the same violent effort. I have seen players blister their hands badly on their first try at golf, and that generally means that the lesson is so painful that it is driven home, and the next time they go out they take it more easily.

I am not hitting at the ball as hard to-day as I did on my first attempt to play. The increase in distance comes from increase in accuracy. My constant effort in studying the game is to find how much easier I can get the same distance and how much more I can control my direction. I never am bothered and no one will ever be bothered in not applying enough power. How,



AT THE MOMENT OF STRIKING THE BALL.



ACCURACY—NOT DISTANCE

then, can I drive this home in a practical manner to the player?

It would seem as though a business man should understand figures, and I make the statement that about one per cent of golf shots are accurate, or approximately so. Yet players are continually striving to add distance which reduces the chance of improving that one per cent. Players will go out on the course after reading this and find that they begin to get distance while their minds are on accuracy, and the lesson will be lost. They will immediately try to increase that distance by going back to the cause of a lack of it. You cannot be accurate if you are unable to see your ball clearly, and you cannot see it clearly if your head sways while you are making your stroke. You cannot make anything approaching a violent effort and keep your head still, and knowing this you have less than a quarter of one per cent of a chance to be master of your stroke if you are swinging so rapidly that you have not perfect control every instant during your swing.

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I have called attention to the fact that if the club head is not moving along the line of flight while in contact with the ball, the ball cannot travel along that line, and that only is the thing to look for in your practice. Keep your head still and have your club head going straight when you meet the ball and you have nothing else to consider. The longer you can have your club head going along the line of flight the flatter will be your arc and the less the tendency to scloff, or top.

Very few beginners can associate ease of effort and accuracy with a long ball. They feel that only a most violent effort will produce the long drive. Every time they swing they are making a much greater effort than the longest driver I know of. It is all wasted. They cannot be brought to see that it is accuracy and "timing" that do the work. If they do see the point they make no attempt to take practical advantage of it. My longest drives come off when I am not trying for anything but to put the ball down the line I am aiming at as true as I can. They seldom come if I am trying for distance. If you

ACCURACY—NOT DISTANCE

desire to get an unusually long ball your mind must more than ever be directed for accuracy because it will be harder to be accurate with a greater effort than you are accustomed to. It is also harder to keep the head still.

The point where I find the average player falls down in his swing is with the shoulders and body. He invariably starts them too soon and too fast, and there is little chance of the hands being able to straighten the club in time. Wait until you can feel the drag of the club at the shoulders before you attempt to use them. Your club head must be around in position before you can feel the strain at the shoulders, and then you can move them as fast as you like.

Take the photograph opposite page 48 and just imagine the club head moving at a good speed, and you will understand how slowly in proportion the shoulders should move. Now, if you will stop and consider that the right arm is bent at the elbow from the top of the swing until just as you get to your ball you will see that any sudden effort of the shoulders until both arms are straight will be wasted.

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If the weapon was a heavy hammer it would not take long to get at the points which give the power. If you have ever seen a lumberman swing his ax at the base of a tree you can understand about the way he applies his power. By reference to the photograph you will grasp the idea of the speed with which I apply the body and shoulders to the stroke, if you can gage about what the woodman's speed would be with his ax. You would never find him looking away from the spot he wished to sink his ax into, and you would find that he would never tire himself out by applying his power before the ax was in a position to take it. The idea is to get a gradually increasing speed until you connect with the ball, and then press steadily. The only difference between you and the woodman is that you would throw yourself clean off your feet if you were to apply any such amount of power when you connect with the ball, as he uses in swinging an ax.

I have had a great many players ask me how still they should keep their heads, even though I have tried to explain that it should be kept as still as though it were held in the one position

ACCURACY—NOT DISTANCE

with a brace. An illustration I used which seemed to help one friend of mine was this: Imagine that you had a glass of water balanced upon your head and you were trying to swing as hard as you could without spilling any of the water out of the glass, and you have a pretty fair idea of the way you have to swing to avoid moving your head. You would avoid making any particular effort at any one point in the swing, because it would jar the head. If anything in the nature of a jerk is introduced anywhere in the swing it is a sign that you are pulling in the hands somewhere. If the swing is made properly you have a total absence of the feeling of power anywhere in the stroke. The club head goes through the ball smoothly and you should be on your guard the moment you can feel the power in the stroke.

As I have stated repeatedly, it is the accuracy and smoothness which give distance and not the tremendous effort. You will never lack in effort. It is the hardest thing you have to control.

There is another feature which I have observed

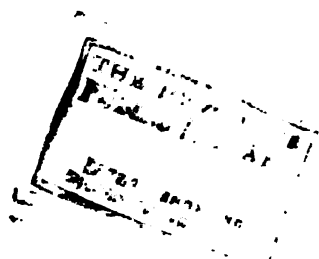
GOLF

in the majority of amateurs, and that is they swing back too slowly. If you will swing at a fair speed throughout you will overcome largely the tendency to stiffen up, and this is what causes the irrepressible desire to get speed at the last minute by one tremendous heave. Swing at a fairly good speed and don't worry so much about every little step in the swing. When you are trying any of my suggestions, try one at a time and only lend a touch of it to your effort. If you dwell too long on any one detail you are apt to develop it out of proportion. If you swing too slowly it makes quite a physical effort of the stroke and you will find greater difficulty in keeping the head still.

The mental attitude has more to do with your success than anything else, and the direct result of the lack of feeling of power in every inexperienced player's stroke is a determined endeavor on his part to swing hard enough so that he can feel it. The result is a foregone conclusion; he makes more effort than he can control and gets practically none of it to the ball. The scheme,



**SHOWS THE RELATIVE POSITIONS OF CLUB-HEAD AND HANDS
AT THE MOMENT OF STRIKING THE BALL.**



ACCURACY—NOT DISTANCE

therefore, is never to swing so hard that you are conscious of the effort.

Take the case of nearly every beginner: when he gets about sixty or seventy yards from the green he swings easier at the ball in order not to go over, and almost invariably he connects cleaner and the ball goes about twice as far as he planned. The great difficulty in learning is the fact that the player has an ever-present desire to feel the power go into the ball, and the few shots that come off in spite of his violent effort only mislead him more and more. Any muscular effort which produces the slightest jerk in the swing requires a corresponding muscular effort to overcome it, and it is the play of the muscles working at cross purposes which makes you conscious of the effort you are making. To guide the club correctly and to keep it from flying out of the hands requires a good firm grip with the fingers, and this is the only place where you should be conscious of a strain of any kind.

GETTING THE BALL UP

CHAPTER VII

GETTING THE BALL UP

POWER or force is always transmitted in a straight line. This is a fundamental law of the universe. It cannot possibly be transmitted in any other way. Is it not reasonable, therefore, that if the club head is traveling in a dead straight line during the time it is in contact with the ball the ball must inevitably be impelled along that same line? It is as sure as that two and two make four.

How, then, can any successful style be developed which does not take this fact into consideration? You can be sure that if your club head is traveling along the imaginary line which runs through the center of your ball, the ball will also go along that line. There is nothing about the club which will make it do otherwise.

It being evident that there is only one way that the ball can possibly be sent away straight, is

GOLF

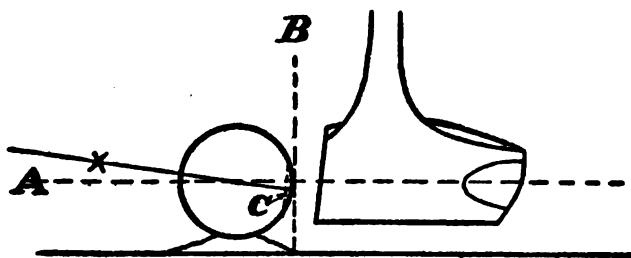
not that the paramount issue? That is what you should concentrate your attention on when you have developed a hook or a slice. Don't shift your grip, or change your stance, or have a club built for a hook when you have developed a slice, or vice versa. The thing is simple enough to understand and within any one's capacity. When you get off your game and develop these faults just go back to first principles, and you can cure them without much trouble. Remember to keep your head in one spot, so that your eyes can see clearly whether your club head is going along that straight line or not.

In golf the ball is on the ground, and we know from experience that it must be driven off the ground and into the air to get the greatest distance. In order to illustrate the point I wish to make I have provided a sketch. In the cut the solid line marked X is the line along which we wish to send the ball, because we must get the ball off the ground and into the air to obtain the greatest flight. By reference to the face of the club you will find that the club is "lofted" or inclined, in order to present a surface at right

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angles to the desired line of flight. This "lofting," or inclining, of the face of the club then will get the ball off the ground, which should relieve the player from worry on that score. He can concentrate all his attention on propelling the ball forward.

Right here is where the vast majority of beginners make a serious mistake. Instead of confin-



ing themselves to an endeavor to propel the ball forward merely, they feel they must get under the ball and hit upward. The club is "lofted" to lift the ball. All the clubs are built with that very object. If a beginner was taught that thoroughly instead of a lot of confusing and complicated directions for swinging, etc., he would have a correct mental conception of what he is trying to accomplish. He would find his own

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correct angles for swinging at his ball, and would be working on a correct understanding of the stroke. Incidentally he would not take two handfuls of sand for a tee. He would also find when he addressed his ball that instead of the club head being about two inches below his ball he would have the ball directly in front of the face of the club. This gives an easier angle to see the ball and helps the player to hold his head still, because if a ball is teed a couple of inches in the air, and the club is on the ground when he starts, he must make a correction somewhere or he will not connect with the ball, but go under it. These corrections all tend to disturb the balance and make it difficult to see the ball clearly.

By referring again to the diagram you will notice that the straight line to apply the force propelling the ball should be along the dotted line marked A. The point on which the player should fix his eye is at the back of the ball, at the point where the dotted line marked B and the line through the center of the ball marked A intersect. Don't try to get farther back after you have started your swing and attempt to see under



**FINISH OF STROKE. THE INCLINE OF THE BODY IS THE
SAME AS IN THE ADDRESS AND AT THE
TOP OF THE SWING.**



GETTING THE BALL UP.

the center of the ball—fix your attention solely on propelling it forward. If you do not keep your head rigidly in one spot you will not see anything but a blurred image and you will find it very difficult to hit anything accurately.

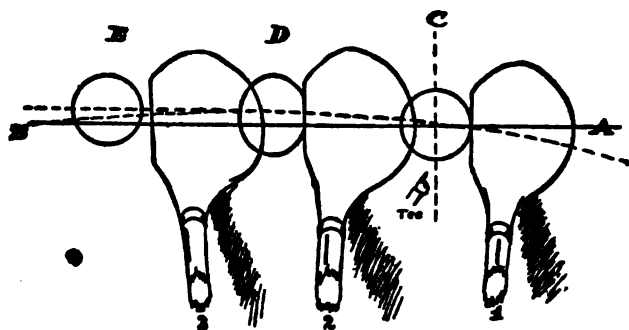
A very important factor in accuracy is what is known as the “snap of the wrist” and therefore I shall endeavor to bring out its purpose more clearly. The “snap of the wrist” is made to maintain the position of the face of the club at right angles to the desired line of flight of the ball along line A, as shown in the diagram. It is much more important that the face of the club is at exact right angles to that line when the ball leaves it than when it is first struck on the tee, as far as direction goes. The fact that most players do hit their ball at right angles and yet get a slice is evidence that what I say is so.

Many players face their clubs in while addressing in order to overcome the slice and to avoid foundering their ball or smothering it; they have to gouge at the ball or turn the face of the club up as they come to it in order to hit the ball clean. It is astonishing how many experienced

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players do this. It comes from a misconception of what happens to the club during the back swing.

You will observe that I have drawn a line on the shaft of the club in position, marked I. If your club was resting on the ground back of your



ball and you made a line in the center of the staff, such as I have in number 1, when you start your back swing properly that line should be turned to the right very slowly, so that if you keep your head absolutely still you can just manage to see this line off to the right out of the corner of your eye when the club is about three or four feet away from the ball. That is as far as it should be turned away. It should be turned that

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far when the club head is traveling through three or four feet of its arc. The club face is thus away from the ball and it should be parallel with line A, the line you desire to send the ball along when it gets opposite the shoulders. This is done by rolling the wrists slightly.

When you come back to the ball don't attempt to roll your wrists back too soon in your anxiety to get them back in time, because even if you do hit the ground before you strike the ball it will be with the bottom of the club at the back near the lead, and it will straighten in ample time. This motion I have described is what is called the "roll of the wrist" by the professionals. It is comparatively gradual and the club travels through about four feet while it is being made. The snap of the wrist comes at the end of the turn the instant the club head connects with the ball, and it is done in a flash, while the ball is still in contact with the club, so quickly that the eye cannot see it.

By reference to the diagram you will observe that the line on the shaft marked 1 is in the center and about two-thirds of the way to the left in

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position 2, while it is just visible in position 8. This change in position takes place while the club is traveling from the tee to about six inches beyond the ball, and it is when this turn, or "snap of the wrist," is made properly that direction is absolutely assured. The ball will leave the club on a beautiful line and with a low, gradual rise.

It is this "snap of the wrist" which prevents the ball from going away to the right when the club head comes in contact with it, because the ball flattens when it is first struck, as shown at D, and when it rebounds from the club, about the position marked E, the ball is traveling much faster than the club head, because it has the speed of the club head plus the rebound due to its being compressed when it was first struck at C. This turn, or "snap of the wrist," also enables the club head to remain on the line A, and the player should remember that it is while this is being done that the right arm should finish the sweep extended as was the left arm on the back swing. The left arm is the guiding arm on the back swing and the right arm should be the guiding

GETTING THE BALL UP

arm the instant the club reaches the ball. The transfer is made with a "snap of the wrists."

Many players have an idea that if they turn in the face of the club, as I have described, they will hook the ball, but they are mistaken. The ball is going very much faster than the club head before the club head leaves line A. This "snap of the wrist" takes place while the arms are both extended, and the idea should be to see how far you can keep your club head going along line A.

I made the experiment recently and I found that my club head would hit three sand tees each one inch high and six inches between centers or twelve inches between the two ends. I aimed at the center one and just clipped the top off each. This is not a bad experiment to try.

One great difficulty, as it appears to me, is that players are not able to judge as to the direction of their own movements, owing to the constant change in the location of their arms, shoulders, and hands, with reference to the ball. The angles are very difficult to gage, and it is my desire to work out a series of steps for those players who

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have little time to work them out for themselves, and to give simple methods of obtaining the correct lines of force. With that end in view I have had a series of photographs taken, which will give readers a clearer idea of the lines of force than would a word picture. These photographs were not posed for in the ordinary sense, for the reason that they were taken while actually making the strokes; in every case my own mind was centered upon hitting the ball clean and hard, and in every instance a ball was driven away.

As I have built my game up on the premise that keeping the head still in order to see the ball clearly is the thing which is most important, all the subsequent steps have been constantly modified by that. I do not obtain my power by any heave at any one point in the swing, but am constantly endeavoring to obtain greater smoothness rather than increase my speed. This has actually increased my distance while my direction has improved correspondingly.

In one photograph is given a view at the top of my swing, and while the position may suggest the most vigorous effort I suggest that the reader


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will remember how much I have dwelt upon the fact that I consider "keeping the head still" the foundation of the game. I do not hurry my swing in order to get distance, and I do not know of any set of muscles I use more than another. I think that the principal thing that I have in mind when working on my swing is to see how evenly I can swing and how I can avoid introducing the slightest jerk of any sort, rather than to get more power.

Many players dwell upon the fact that they are not limber enough to get a free swing, but it is only because they continually strive to get more power rather than greater accuracy. At the point shown in the illustration every muscle in my body is relaxed to its fullest extent, and the only thing approaching firmness which I am conscious of is in the fingers.

One photograph which I publish is a bird's-eye view of the way I stand to my ball (as though the reader was above me), because that is the best way to give him an idea of how the stance and ball and mental picture of the stroke look to me. I think that most any beginner or any one

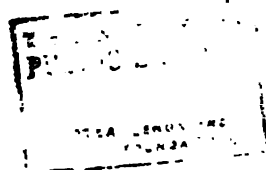
GOLF

who has not studied the theory of the game will see at once how different my plan looks from his point of view or the mental picture or theory upon which he works. In the first place, I know that very few players will agree with me offhand that my club shaft is addressing the ball at the correct angle. They cannot conceive that a ball will go off on line A if the hands are to the left of line C, as shown in the illustration. To any one not familiar with the game it looks in the illustration as though the ball would certainly go off to the right of line A, but I know from experience that it will not, and the reason is that the stance has but little bearing upon the stroke. It is the gage you take at the top of your swing which counts. The real pivotal center of the stroke is not the hands, or wrists, or head, but is a point exactly between the two shoulders, and I have marked it in the illustration at the base of the neck, indicated by a cross (x) .

The reason I have placed so much emphasis upon keeping the head still is in order that this pivotal center between the shoulders at the base of the neck may preserve its relation to the ball,



**IMAGINE THE CLUB-HEAD MOVING RAPIDLY AND NOTE
HOW SLOWLY THE SHOULDERS MUST
MOVE IN PROPORTION.**



GETTING THE BALL UP

and you can readily see how important that is if you are to hit the ball accurately and along the line you desire to send it. All the muscles of the body below that pivotal center are in action and helping to expend their energy to propel the club forward, except those which are controlling the head. The reason I say that keeping the head still and in one spot is the foundation of golf is twofold. The first reason is that that is the only way in which you can see the ball clearly; the second is that in that way only can you preserve the pivotal center constant in relation to the ball.

Now, if the centrifugal force is an important factor to be considered, and experience has taught all golfers after a few swings that it is, allowance must be made for it somewhere. It is evident that the balance must be preserved, and I have found in my own case that if my arms are kept straight—that is, the elbows not bent—and I address the ball at the toe of the club instead of the center of the face, it gives me the correct distance when I come back to the ball. This address is one preventive measure because it keeps me from go-

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ing beyond the ball and having to draw my hands in to hit it.

As there is more power transferred through the arms by the shoulders and back when the arms are extended than when they are bent (due partly to the greater leverage by reason of the greater distance between the club head and the pivotal center, and the fact that with them extended you cannot use the forearms), you have more nearly a fixed line for guiding the club when the club shaft and the left arm are in line and you have more play of the wrists when your club reaches the ball in this style, as shown in the illustration, because there is no bend in the left wrist as there is when your club shaft is in line between the pivotal center and the ball. Not only this, but it gives greater freedom on the turn when you come to the follow through, and if you have more natural freedom at this point than on the back swing, you have provided a favorable condition for applying your greatest power where it is needed.

MAKING THE SWING

CHAPTER VIII

MAKING THE SWING

THE majority of players devote too much time and place too much importance on their address. The result is that they fix in their minds the appearance of the angles which are presented by the position of the arms, legs, and club shaft, and it is largely the desire to retain these angles constant which results in their moving their heads and stiffening their muscles so that there is no freedom in the swing. The idea of many is to have all the angles which they have studied out kept constant until they get back to their ball, and this results in shifting the feet, changing the grip, and various other faults which are seen so often on the links.

There is only one point which vitally affects the stroke, and the only reason why that should be kept constant is that you are thus enabled to see your ball clearly. That is the pivotal point marked

GOLF

at the base of the neck, and a line drawn from this point to the ball should be directly at right angles to the desired line of flight. The address shown in the photograph opposite page 68 with the arms extended downward, not bent at the elbows, is the only position which I find is comfortable to maintain. I desire to caution players that by the word extended I do not mean to have it understood that the arms are reaching out for the ball, but are extended down, with absolutely no bend in the left wrist. If the player will grasp his club with the left hand, more especially in the fingers, rather than in the palm of his hand, and place the head of the club in the position shown in the illustration, and fix his mind solely on finding the most comfortable position he can assume, rather than upon the angle of the club face or shaft, he will have grasped the idea I wish to convey. My purpose in assuming the stance shown is to obtain greater comfort, thereby giving greater freedom to the play of the muscles and avoiding the slightest tendency to stiffen, which destroys the freedom of the swing. I have found it to be a basic principle

MAKING THE SWING

for my own case in golf that the instant I find any stiffening of the muscles at any particular point in my stroke to search for some way to give greater freedom and overcome this "setting" of the muscles. That will destroy the accuracy of any stroke and also reduce its power.

As I have found in my early experience that bending the elbows in the address results in the centrifugal force in the downward stroke tending to pull my club head beyond the ball and making it impossible to strike accurately unless I draw them in, thus giving a slice, I decided that keeping the arms straight should be the simplest way of overcoming this trouble. As the majority of golfers do this, it is evident that they have reached the same conclusion I did. The trouble is that they straighten them and reach for the ball besides. Reaching for the ball in the address stiffens the muscles and prevents any freedom in the swing.

It is far easier to control the amount of play you will allow the arms in the downward stroke, if you are coming down inside the ball, than if you are going beyond it, because the centrifugal

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force is helping it go out, and you only have to yield a little to reach the ball; but if you are going beyond the ball you have the centrifugal force to overcome in pulling in the hands, which multiplies the effort. Therefore it is a decided advantage to keep the arms well in toward the body.

My own scheme is to get to the top of my swing in the easiest way I can, and I let the centrifugal force carry my club out in the downward swing until it reaches the ball. This enables me to exert all my energy in propelling my club and leaves but very little effort required to guide it. The very first time a beginner swings at a ball he invariably swings too short because the amount of centrifugal force, or force which tends to pull the club outward, is so great that he involuntarily pulls in his hands for fear he will go beyond the ball. After two or three tries he finally lets his arms out enough to reach it. There is usually plenty of energy in his swing, and he has only to consider how far he has to reach to the ball. As soon as he begins

MAKING THE SWING

to learn to hit his ball accurately he loses the natural freedom of his swing.

If the hands and arms were in motion in the address it would be necessary to have them reaching for the ball, but as they are stationary the idea should be to obtain the easiest and most comfortable position in order that as the player reaches the top of his swing he will not have tired the muscles from holding a set position. In the illustration I show the hands to the left of the line between the eyes and the ball. This position of the hand insures that I will not reach the bottom of my swing until after I have reached my ball. When the player considers that the pivot of the sweep is not at the hands, but at the pivotal center between the shoulders, he will better grasp the flatness of the arc made by the sweep of the club when it goes through the ball. Bear in mind that the angles at which you address the ball have little or no influence, but it is the way you take your gage at the top of the swing that counts.

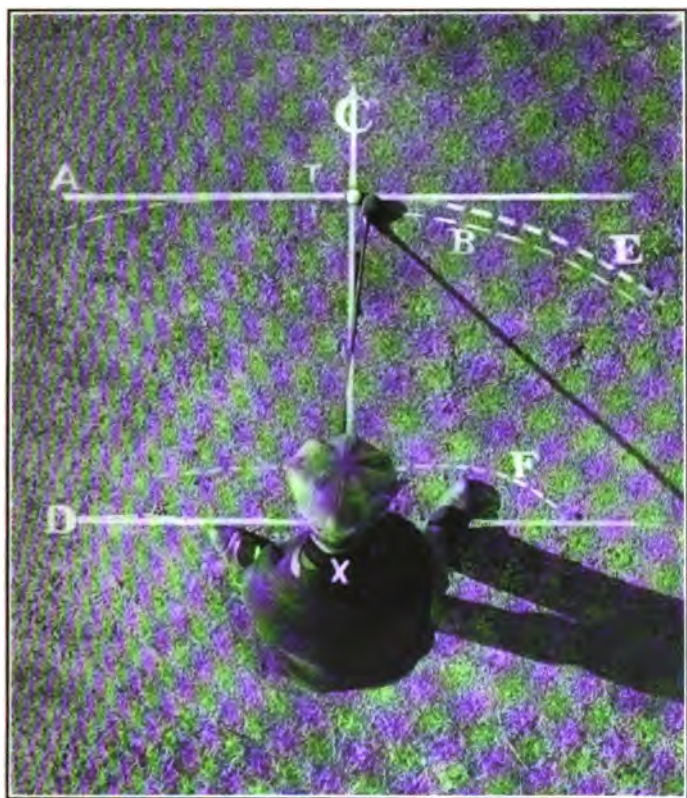
The distance between the pivotal center and

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the ball as you address it is the equivalent in a man of say five feet seven using forty-three-inch clubs of a circle the radius of which is seventy inches. This would give a circle nearly twelve feet in diameter. This is why it is possible to get such a flat arc when you reach the ball.

From the illustration it may be thought that I am reaching out for the ball, but that is not the case. My arms are both close to my body and both are straight. The club shaft and left arm are in line and both are parallel to the right leg. This gives the player a firmer control of the club with the left arm or guiding arm than when the left wrist is bent in as you are compelled to do when the ball is addressed with the club shaft in line between the eyes and the ball. The position shown also gives a little more play to the left arm in starting the back swing and much greater freedom in the wrist.

The moment the left knee is bent in it throws the left shoulder forward while the right hip is drawn backward and this makes it possible to draw the left arm around close to the body. As the body is tilted at an angle of nearly forty-five



**THE ADDRESS FROM OVERHEAD, SHOWING ANGLES AND
LINES OF MOTION AS THEY APPEAR TO THE ONE
DRIVING. (SEE PAGE 99).**



MAKING THE SWING

degrees, it is necessary to bring the left shoulder around as low as possible to avoid striking the chin at the top of the swing, thus moving or jarring the head and interfering with a clear view of the ball. The mistake with the vast majority of players is that they do not keep the body tilted at the same angle as when they addressed their ball, due to the fact that they attempt to bring the club up over their shoulders by a direct lifting up of the club instead of by tilting the body.

The shoulders play a very vital part in the swing due to their great power, and any undue play of the shoulders is bound to affect the arms and the club. The entire effort should be to keep the shoulders in the same plane throughout their sweep. Avoid raising them, as that changes the relative position of the club to the ball. If I were to make a general criticism of the majority of players I think I should say "Relax!" "Relax!" Avoid the "setting" of any of the muscles rigidly.

In the early days of my golf I had an idea that there was something almost supernatural

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and weird about the way the professionals could bring off their shots. I had my mind on a hundred things and couldn't do any of them well. In golf, as in everything else, I have found that when anything is not easy and simple to understand, I had better dispense with it. Do nothing you do not understand and have not a definite reason for.

Instead of raising the left heel from the ground the effort should be, if at all, to keep it down. If your physique will allow you to do so and get around to the top of your swing, you will find it easier to maintain your balance with both feet and both heels on the ground. The more support you get the better. My left heel comes off the ground because I am not limber enough to keep it down and get to the top of my swing easily.

No one can assume a stance at the outset that will be final. As golf is a gradual development, the stance, or position in relation to the ball, must be progressive and should be changed from time to time as the player works out his theories and improves the mental picture of his stroke. A stance that might be perfectly correct for one

MAKING THE SWING

scheme of hitting the ball would be utterly unsuitable to another. To my way of thinking, the stance must be subordinate to the swing, and as the swing is governed by the player's physique, I think that setting oneself in a definite position and making the swing subordinate to that is absurd.

As I have shown that one of the elementary things in golf is the fact that unless the club head is traveling along a dead straight line while in contact with the ball, the ball won't go along that line, it is evident that the player must satisfy himself by swinging as to what line his club travels in its sweep, and then adjust himself in his stance so that the desired line of flight and the natural line of his sweep coincide. Whether the ball is off the right foot or the left foot, or the left foot is farther advanced than the right, or vice versa, I think is of no consequence, and too much time is wasted on the subject by the majority of players, with the result that the really important item is befogged or overlooked. It is the player's swing which should govern his stance and not the stance the swing. You can

GOLF

and do change your stance every time you strike a side hill or down slope or any of the hundred varieties of lies on the course, but the swing should not be tampered with lightly.

When I find an awkward shot to be played I first satisfy myself as to how I can swing without losing my balance and moving my head; then I note the line my club travels along and walk up to my ball, knowing what to expect.

As the club head is in contact with the ball for several inches of its arc, it is important that the ball should be first met at a little distance, say a couple of inches, before the club has reached the lowest point in its sweep, because the ball will stay against the club head from that point in a partially collapsed condition, and the full force of the blow will be exerted at a time when the club is traveling more nearly parallel with the ground. The ball will be less likely to rise beyond the line at right angles to the face of the club. The thing to observe before assuming the stance is where the club head will travel for the greatest distance along a straight line in whatever swing you have perfected; then remem-

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ber that the ball is in contact with the club head for several inches, and after a few trial swings you can see what relation your feet have with regard to that line. This will determine your stance.

My practice in the address is to keep the hands to the left of a line directly between the eyes and the ball in order to obtain, first, a clearer view of the ball; second, an easier position to start my club away from the ball; third, to obtain a more comfortable position when holding my left arm well extended or straightened, not outward but down, because it is easier to maintain the balance when the arms do not reach out so far and gives greater freedom and flexibility; fourth, in order to keep my weight on the flat of my feet, which makes it easier to control the swaying of the body than when reaching out with the arms and throwing the weight on the ball of the foot; fifth, keeping the left arm down also keeps my left shoulder down, and gives me a more comfortable position when I get to the top of my swing; sixth, it prevents my stopping my hands when I come down at the ball but fixes in my mind the

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maintenance of the application of power until my ball leaves the club; seventh, because when my ball leaves the club head after having been in contact with it for several inches of its sweep, my club face is at exact right angles and my hands and the club shaft are at perfect right angles to the desired line of flight; eighth, because when the ball leaves the club at that point the momentum still being imparted to the club head draws the right arm out after the ball and the finish of the stroke takes care of itself without my giving thought to it and enables me to finish without any tendency to lose my balance; ninth, and of the utmost importance, it makes me turn my wrists with the right hand over the left, and makes it impossible to get the ball away at all if I turn the right hand under the left with the face of the club up, which is so productive of slicing.

MAKING THE SWING
(continued)

CHAPTER IX

MAKING THE SWING

(continued)

A POINT to which I wish to direct especial attention is the matter of keeping the eyes, club shaft, and club face at dead right angles to the desired line of flight of the ball. I think it is a great mistake to attempt this, as it gives an awkward bend to the left wrist, which has to be accommodated at the top of the swing, and you will find great difficulty in keeping the left arm properly extended if you use that stance. Besides this you will experience great difficulty in turning the right hand over the left the instant your club head meets the ball. It also brings a shock upon the wrist which doesn't belong there. The worst objection of all is its effect on the eyes, as they see so many things moving in a line with the ball that they unconsciously have a tendency to follow. The fewer things you have

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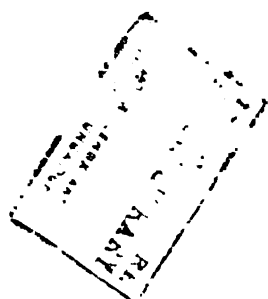
directly in your line of view the better. This is another reason for keeping the hands low.

The majority of elderly men I have observed have a tendency to raise their shoulders too high, apparently as though they were trying to get a sight on the ball, as if their club shaft was a rifle barrel. This only distracts the attention and makes it more difficult to keep the balance, as the more the arms are reaching out and the shoulders raised the more the weight is thrown forward on the toes or ball of the foot, and the greater the tendency to fall forward the moment they start their back swing. It is very difficult to make allowances and corrections after the swing has begun.

I have noticed also that the vast majority of the older men stand too far away from their ball. It is much easier to get speed in the club in a short than in a long circle, and yet I have seen players take still longer shafts in the hope of making up in leverage what they lack in speed. I am pretty strong, and yet I have found that swinging long-shafted clubs tires me and I am sure it must tire them. I have observed that with



**IT IS A MISTAKE FOR OLDER MEN TO ADDRESS THE BALL
AS THOUGH THEY WERE TRYING TO AIM
ALONG THE SHAFT.**



MAKING THE SWING

few exceptions the professionals have all discarded the long clubs.

There is a certain amount of speed necessary to get distance of any extent, and I should advise the older men to use lighter instead of longer clubs to accomplish the purpose. They could then get up speed in a shorter swing than when using clubs of normal weight, and could rely more upon maintaining a steady pressure at a good speed rather than greater leverage at a much slower rate. The effort would be far less tiring.

It should be remembered that in the address I keep my arms straight down, close to the body, and when I start my club back from the ball I keep it on the line of flight upon which the ball is resting and against that line as long as I can comfortably. As my body is tilted it seems that I am making my sweep along the ground until my club head is past the base line upon which I am standing.

When it is realized that the circle described with the arms extended is equal to the radius in a twelve-foot circle it will be apparent how grad-

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ual is the rise of the club from the ground or near the ground. I also find that by keeping the club on the ground or near the ground until I pass the base line upon which I am standing, I hardly notice when I turn my wrist, as the turn is so gradual. Another thing I observe is that it seems as though the left hand parallels the line of flight upon which the ball rests. Keeping my club close to the ground until I have passed the base line upon which I stand also keeps my left shoulder from coming up, which would result in my straightening up and thus changing the whole plane of the swing, and this is exactly what the majority of players do.

To get to the position shown in the illustration it is necessary to bend the least bit at the waist on the left side of the body. Otherwise the left shoulder will be forced around so that it strikes the chin at the top of the swing. The bend at the waist should only be in the very slightest degree, or it will be overdone. It should be perfectly comfortable and hardly noticeable to an observer. Most players overdo everything.

When you bend the left knee have it come in

MAKING THE SWING

a very little bit toward the base line upon which you are standing. Bend only the least bit, however, or you will overdo it. Keep your left heel on the ground if you can comfortably. Anything which causes your attention to be attracted to it is being overdone. Now if the player in practicing the turn to bring his club to the top of the swing will keep his head still, he will find that he can comfortably do each of the steps only a little. He will also find it to be wise not to put his strength into the stroke faster than his wrists will get his club into position to take it.

One of the main things I look for in my preliminary swing or "waggle" over the ball is to "feel" that the natural arc I am using in my swing is sure to be flat and "down" to the ball; in other words, to be sure that my stance is taken in such a manner that it is almost impossible to go over the ball. As this has been of such great assistance to me I wish that it could be shown by a diagram. It is purely by the sense of "touch" or feeling that I am conscious of this "balance," as it might be called, but it is the main thing I watch in my preliminary "waggle." I

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think it is more of a poise of the club, as the guiding of the club is shifted from the left hand before you reach the ball to the right hand after you get to the ball.

It is a very hard point to bring out without being able to swing a club to show the idea. I note from a careful analysis of the effort that one of the points I became conscious of by close observation is that the pivot is not made in the hands so much, but it is a sort of trial to see how my head acts when my arms, shoulders, and body are in motion; if there is the slightest difficulty in keeping my balance I keep shifting my position very slightly until I feel absolutely comfortable and am certain that there will be no stiffness at any point in the swing. In other words, I endeavor to get everything "free" in order that I may not become conscious of a disturbing element in the swing. My deliberate purpose, as I explained in a previous chapter, is to keep my head absolutely still in order that I can see clearly.

I do not approve of seesawing from one leg to another in the address, because I cannot see

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the ball clearly. Do all the "waggling" with the arms, shoulders, and hands; if you do that well in the preliminary and do not disturb your view of the ball, you will have a much greater chance of doing it correctly when you make your actual swing. Keep the feet still as well, and do not sway the body. Seesawing and wiggling the feet are bad habits because they disturb you in your effort to concentrate upon your ball.

I made the experiment recently with a friend who was badly off his game, and who had been off for months, of making him concentrate his entire attention in looking at his ball and eliminating every effort and purpose except to see that ball clearly every instant on his back swing and downward swing. In other words, I insisted that he actually "see" his ball clearly the whole time occupied in his swing. It cured him of his troubles at once, and he said, "Well, I never have actually seen that ball right since I took up the game."

This is an illustration of how simple a rule will cure all, or nearly all, golfing ills if it is properly observed. If the player can actually con-

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trol his effort to the point where he actually sees the ball from the start until he hits it, never shifting his gaze for the least instant, he will never have any trouble in hitting that ball, no matter what his form may be. If that one point is observed it will cure stiffness in the swing, swinging back too far or too short, or hitting too soon. Don't look up an instant or shift your gaze until your club head reaches the ball. When you have a particularly hard shot to get off put your whole mind on this one thing. The best plan is to practice hitting a ball a few times in this way and you will quickly gain confidence. Shifting the glance is as bad as looking away from the ball. Keep it on the one spot on the ball throughout. Do not look at your club to see if it is squared to the ball or allow your eye to follow it as you draw it away. The ball and the ball only is the one thing to look at.

Now if you will consider the matter of the centrifugal force and will remember the old figure of swinging a stone around your head at the end of a string, you will remember that the stone will gradually leave the ground and go

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higher and higher as you increase the speed, until when you get up high speed the stone will be about as far from the ground as the hand which is whirling it. As your club shaft is stiff you are able to get up a very high speed at once, and you have the same effect upon the club, due to the weight of the club head, that the stone has upon the string. In addition to this you have a complication due to the fact that you are describing an upright circle as well as a horizontal one, and consequently you must direct the power so that these two circles synchronize.

One very natural result of the player's discovery of this fact is the effort to get the shoulders up nearly in a line with the eyes in order to see this line. He should remember that the eyes are about a foot above the pivotal center, and raising the shoulders is not the remedy. The more you can get away from taking a sight of the ball along the line of the shaft of the club and the nearer you can come to getting a bird's-eye view of the ball, keeping the line along which the power is directed below the line between the eyes and the ball, the greater will be the absence

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of disturbing elements along the line of vision and the more compact the muscles and the greater the flexibility throughout.

As the head is so far above the line between the pivotal center between the shoulders and the ball, I find it a great help in my own case to look down on the ball rather than to get my angles from along the shaft. I have observed that I have much better results from this view of the ball and far less tendency to look up too soon than when I used to take my gage more along the shaft. You can get a much better view of the position of the face of the club from looking down on top of it than when looking along the club shaft. In one case the natural tendency is to look away when you start to draw the club back, as the instinctive desire seems to be to follow a moving object. The other way your aim has been taken regardless of the club shaft and you stand a better chance of hitting the ball. I have found from experience that much depends upon the way you see your lines and fix the angles mentally.

Before leaving this subject, I must call atten-

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tion to a point which may help players to understand how they can keep their club head traveling along the line of flight, which has so much to do with the direction. If you will take the view shown in the photograph, i. e., looking down on top of the ball rather than along the line of the shaft, you will notice that if you are leaning over properly the only way you can keep the club head upon the line of flight is to keep the hands moving along parallel with that line. In other words, if you draw in your hands you will draw in the club head also. The idea should be as though you were trying to keep the club shaft at right angles with the line of flight as long as the ball and the club head are in contact. In short, you should sweep the hands along with the club head while the ball and club head are in contact. This is what the professionals mean when they say to "throw the hands out after the ball," or "throw the club at the ball."

EASE RATHER THAN EFFORT



CHAPTER X

EASE RATHER THAN EFFORT

THE idea of being comfortable and doing things easily seems to be a hard one for many golfers to grasp. We hear so much about physique being so different with different people that players are apt to assume that theirs is one of the remarkable physiques without flexibility, and we hear them apologize for their lack of freedom by blaming it upon nature. This is silly. Everyone is built pretty much alike as far as the frame goes, and there is about so much play to each hinge joint and each ball and socket joint in the body. The point where people differ most, as regards golf, is in their mental make up. One man grasps a principle easily that another man has to "saw wood" to master. They say with a mysterious confidence: "It is mental," much as they would say: "It is a secret, let it go no further." They nurse a pet

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idea with such persistency that they become infatuated with it. I have seen players stand for minutes, marbleized in an effort to address the ball as though the address solved the making of the stroke.

I have often wondered what can be in such players' minds. To stand in front of the ball with every muscle set and not a trace of movement, even of an eyelid, is inviting almost sure disaster. It is not the way you keep your eye on the ball when you are "set" in the address which enables you to hit it accurately, but the way you keep it on the ball when you are in action that counts.

Doing things comfortably is the keynote of the whole swing. It is what gives the results, because the strength is being properly applied. The instant you have to brace your muscles you should be warned that you are drifting away from the correct method of playing. If you will let comfort be the check upon any scheme of play you adopt, you will not go far wrong.

As I stated in another chapter, only youngsters



THIS IS AN EASIER WAY FOR OLDER MEN TO ADDRESS
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will ever be able to learn imitatively. If you get better results by your own method, that is the one to follow. Don't try to look like somebody else. Fix in your mind what you are really trying to accomplish, and let your common sense be your guide in solving the problem. Do not ask if you are rolling your wrists correctly, but ask what the object is, and get the player to show you what he has in mind in swinging in such and such a fashion. If you can learn his reason or purpose, you can apply the knowledge. If you merely try to imitate his swing, you are not getting any permanent benefit from his teaching. You can only learn golf little by little, and the steps come one at a time. It is so with everyone.

The three steps in the order of their importance, which you must constantly bear in mind when working out the various details, are: (1) Keep the head still; (2) keep your club head traveling in a straight line while in contact with the ball; and (3) do not "set" the muscles. If you find you are going off your game these are the things you must run over in your mind and

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in the order of their importance. Do not change your stance and swing. Apply these three items in this order and you will get "back" again.

It is the confusion between pushing and lifting, of which the player is perfectly conscious through his sense of touch or feeling, which makes the "timing" of the maximum effort so difficult to accomplish. Very few players have thought out these two distinct efforts, and it is the struggle of the two sets of muscles for mastery, which is responsible for so much lost power, those which are used in lifting being opposed to those which are used in pushing.

If you were to grasp with both hands a pole about an inch in diameter, firmly fastened to the ground and to the ceiling, and attempt to push it downward you would find that it would use one set of muscles and to lift or push it upward would use an entirely different set. When you pushed downward it would take most of the weight from your legs. When you tried to lift or push upward it would leave all your weight upon your legs, and in addition the amount of extra weight

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corresponding to the amount of energy you were exerting.

A golf swing is one of the most complicated things to study, because the motion is made in a circle, but the maximum power is exerted in either one way or the other, lifting or pushing down, according to the peculiar physique of the player and the style he has adopted. The dub tries to use both at once. The average player compromises and tries first a little of the downward push and then a little of the lift, and to do this he has to shift his head and body to allow for whichever set of muscles he is compelled to use. This moving or shifting results in disturbing the view of the ball, preventing him from seeing it clearly, and naturally makes it extremely difficult to hit it accurately.

Players must make up their minds that either one system or the other must be sacrificed. If you are to use a lift, you can accomplish nothing by attempting to lift before your club head reaches the ball. If you are going to push, you must hold back your maximum effort until the

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club head reaches the ball, or you will have nothing in reserve to keep the club head against the ball long enough to accumulate power and the follow through is of no use.

Mere motion, when not backed up by weight, will not transfer much energy to the ball. In other words, it would be just as easy to drive a ball a great distance with the club head attached to a string if it were not for the fact that there is not much more than one chance in a million of connecting at the exact point of the natural balance of the club. The great difficulty in hitting the ball with the club at the exact balancing point makes necessary a firm grip to overcome the inequalities in the blow. This inequality is distributed partly in the player's frame, partly in the club shaft, and partly in the ball. The more accurately the club strikes at its exact point of balance the smaller are these losses, and it is here that the attention of beginners should be focused—not on a scheme of developing greater power. The losses will multiply in a much greater ratio than the power can be increased.

Taking the fact that the weight is the only

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thing which can be used in an effort exerted downward, on the principle that a man can get upon a platform and lift much more weight than he can pull down on a rope, where the limit he can pull is his own weight, the point is to apply this weight practically. The player cannot be accurate under any conditions where the pull downward toward the ball is exerted violently or with a heave. The way to hit is to exert the pull steadily and accumulate power in the club head, which is coming down partly of its own weight and partly with the "leaning upon the club," which the player exerts and which I have proved should be but little.

You can lean or shift the weight only very slowly, and the idea in the player's mind when striking downward should be to have the club head whirled around by the arms and hands before you attempt to lean on the ball, as it were. If you are to shift your weight so as to lean on the club, you must wait until the club reaches the ball or you will not have enough distance to clear the ground and avoid hitting back of the ball. It is as though you were to lean the weight of the

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shoulders against the ball at the instant the club head reaches it. Players start to lean upon the ball too soon and shorten the distance between the shoulders and the ball too much, and to take up the slack, so to speak, are forced to draw in their arms.

When the ball is badly cupped it is common sense that you cannot lift it out, as it will be impossible to get down to the ball in order to have the lift count. To get down to a cupped ball you must lean on the club.

A rule in golf which I have thought out carefully is to bring the feet nearer and nearer together as you find that you are either hitting too soon, looking up too soon, or hitting too hard. For instance, if you will take your driver in your hands and instead of taking your stance place both heels together you will find that it will absolutely control your effort to hit too hard. You cannot hit too hard and stay on your feet and you will unconsciously ease up. Many things have drawn my attention to this fact and it has been so impressed upon my mind that I have decided

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to offer it as a rule. I have noticed that those players who spread their feet far apart on a shot are invariably "over" when they hit the ball true. I have noticed that those players who play the finest "running up" approaches and keep the finest line stand with the feet close together. I have noticed that those players who sclaff and top the most invariably stand with what is called a "wide open stance." I find in my own case that this rule invariably has put me back on my drive at once when I get a little off. I have also found that it is absolutely efficacious in a high wind. The harder the wind blows the more you should bring the feet together. This may not seem reasonable, but I have tried it out thoroughly and know it will accomplish the desired result.

It would seem as though the wind would blow you off your balance when you do not brace yourself against it, but that very bracing of the muscles makes accuracy still more difficult. The average player thinks that he should hit harder when driving into a wind, but it is not the way to

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get off a good ball. Be more careful to hit perfectly true and you will be astonished to see the distance you get.

I have tried the idea out with beginners and they invariably respond with an improvement. On short shots it has been absolutely reliable. It makes for an easy, graceful swing; it helps wonderfully in keeping the head still and it overcomes the tendency to stiffen up so common with beginners. It will teach you to use the body and shoulders more and correct most of the faults in "timing" the stroke. It overcomes the natural tendency to throw the balance off, or from one foot to the other, which will always disturb the position of the head and change the relative positions of the entire scheme upon which you take your gage.

Taken in connection with the first and most important rule of golf—that is, to keep the head absolutely still throughout the swing—it is probably one item which will accomplish more good than paying attention to fifty other things.

A suggestion in connection with these two rules is to allow the "follow through" to pull you

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around. This will stop your "hitting so blamed hard." I have noticed that those players who use the "wide-open stance" invariably are hard hitters and very wild in direction. Just consider that if you spread your feet apart and brace yourself very firmly your natural instinct is to swing hard. The reason is probably the fact that the muscles have been trained by years of experience to respond with a great effort when such a position is assumed, and the desire to "kill the ball" which is so strong in everyone, and against which I have been warning players, is perfectly natural with a "wide-open stance."

If you had to balance yourself on one foot your effort would be very mild, no matter what your desire was. The instinct to keep your feet would be too strong to be resisted.

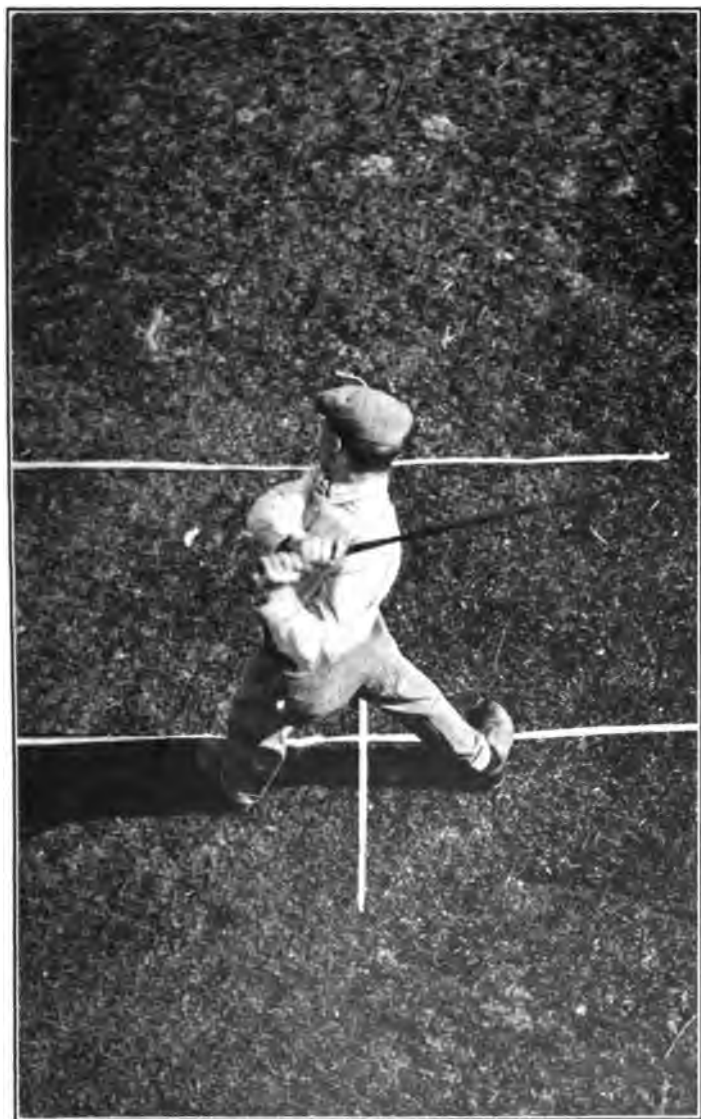
In the practice swings of the majority of players you will notice that they do not spread their feet apart; they merely try out the arms, and that is why they get such a smooth, easy swing. The moment they attempt to hit the ball the very firmness of the stance predisposes them toward a more violent effort, and that is where they "fall down"

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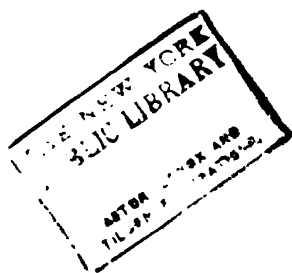
on the shot. The more difficult the shot the greater freedom you require for the play of the muscles to bring it off, and this same rule will apply to it. A little experimenting with this idea in mind will do much to help players who find they are "off their game."

I do not want to be understood as advocating a stance for a drive with the heels together, but I do say that when you find yourself hitting too soon, looking up too soon, or hitting too hard, you should bring the feet closer and closer together until you have overcome the tendency. This rule applies also to the playing of short shots and should be followed without the slightest hesitancy. The shorter the shot the nearer the feet should be brought together.

A fact which requires careful consideration is that if you stand a little nearer to the ball than you are accustomed to, you are naturally more over it, or at least it brings the head more over it, which amounts to the same thing. Naturally you cannot make a very great effort without digging into the ground behind the ball, because the centrifugal force generated in the downward



BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF THE FINISH OF THE SWING.



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swing will carry the club beyond or below the ball.

This may appear to be wrong, but it is not. The reason it is not is that it makes you hold back your maximum effort until your arms have room to go out to the limit of your reach which enables you to apply the greatest power at the right time; that is, after you have connected with the ball. In other words, you first connect with the ball when your arms and shoulders have not been extended to their limit. You have some leeway still to follow up the blow by letting the arms and shoulders go out after the ball and keeping the club head against it. If you try to keep your club head against the ball steadily, when the arms and shoulders have reached out to their limit, you must yield somewhere in order to do so, because when the arms and shoulders have reached their limit the club must start upon its upward journey, and as the ball moves out in a straight line while the club is moving upward on a curved line the only way that the club head can stay against the ball is for you to yield somewhere. The moment you yield with the body your head moves

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and your muscles must stop work or you will fall over forward.

This is exactly what the average player does. He has no leeway to follow up the blow of the first impact of the club, and that is all the power that is exerted upon the ball. In other words, the ball is slapped away instead of having a steady, accumulating pressure against it. You are compelled to look up because you cannot continue your effort. Your eye, as well as your sense of touch, tells you that you are going beyond your ball, and you involuntarily let up on the power because you know you will not connect with the ball if you keep up the effort, and as I have shown in a previous chapter, you will always let up when your principal purpose is accomplished. You cannot help doing it.

If you have held something in reserve in order to maintain the pressure against the ball for some distance after you first connect with it you will keep adding to its speed, and if it were possible for you to swing fast enough to increase the speed of the club as rapidly as the ball is moving after you connect with it so that your club head would

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still be against it for a couple of feet farther out, it would give you a tremendous distance. Now the harder you hit the ball when you first meet it with the club head the quicker it will bounce away and the shorter the time you can keep the club head against it. This not only reduces the distance obtained but it also emphasizes any slight error in hitting it.

In suggesting that players stand over their ball more in addressing it, the fact that this brings the center of gravity nearer to the place where it belongs should be at once apparent. The consequent increase in ability to maintain the balance should convince the player that it is a decided advantage. Instead of having to brace the muscles all over the body to maintain the equilibrium constant you can stand comfortably and reach your ball easily. According to the Standard dictionary, "Equilibrium signifies the state of a body which, submitted to action of any number of forces, is still in the same condition as if those forces did not act."

So far as propelling the ball is concerned, the only muscles which add anything to the force of

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gravity which pulls upon the club head on its downward sweep, increasing the speed at which it is traveling, are those muscles which would twist the body around. The muscles which are used in lifting are useless. They are the most powerful, as they get the most exercise, and the most powerful of all are in the legs. The effort to use them causes you to change the relative distance between the pivotal center of the stroke and the ball. As they are the strongest muscles in the body, and any effort to use them is neutralizing whatever effort you are making to increase the downward and forward sweep of the club, it should be evident that you must avoid any such effort. If you do use them they will only keep your head swaying around and destroying any chance you may have to hold it still and see your ball clearly.

If you wish to keep your head still, and that is really the only thing to master in golf, regardless of all the things I have written, you will find that when you absolutely stop every tendency to use the lifting muscles, you can use all the strength you have in the other muscles without disturbing

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the position of the head. If you brace yourself by standing with the feet far apart you cannot help using the lifting muscles. It is bound to happen, because the action is involuntary. If you are not so braced you cannot use them, because your body is not in the right position to do so. If you cannot use them by reason of standing with the feet fairly close together, you cannot move your head much, even if you want to.

The only thing which you can possibly accomplish by using the lifting muscles and bracing yourself with the feet well apart is to lift the club up quickly, and every rule I have ever heard given is to go back slowly. If you are not braced, your muscles cannot raise the club quickly. This is accomplishing much. If you are in a comfortable position, such as you are accustomed to stand in naturally, you will easily see that you cannot reach for the ball very much without spreading the feet apart. As reaching for the ball gives you no leeway, this is another point where standing easily and comfortably is curing a fault.

To look at a good player with the intention of noticing the difference in his method and that of a

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poor player, this easy, comfortable position is at once apparent in the better player's stance. He does everything easily. He has learned to cut out the things which spoil a poor player's efforts. He has learned to relax his lifting muscles and can take slight liberties in the matter of stance. For the average player a stance with the feet closer together is bound to be a great help. What the beginner and the average player need is not power, as I have said so many times, but accuracy. That gives the distance and there is then time enough to refine and perfect the accuracy to gain more power. It is the harmony of perfect action in the good player's swing which gives the results.

All the energy in excess of that which passes into the ball is wasted. Players swing so hard as a rule that they cannot get the feel of a correctly hit ball and consequently their muscles are not educated to the "feel" of correct balance, etc. Neither are their eyes trained, which would, to an extent, govern the involuntary action of the muscles. Certainly a man who is not swinging correctly may be supposed to be moving his head

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also, so that he cannot see the ball clearly when the club head meets it.

Players can tell the moment they are going to play a good game because they have the "feel" of the shot, which is only another way of saying that the muscles and sense of touch have been awakened to the correct gage and balance, and the player knows he can hit the ball. A couple of times a year is about as often as the average player gets right on his game and plays his best, because about that often he has worked and slaved and finally got the "feel" of it.

The secret of it is to study this matter of lifting and pushing down. I have demonstrated that each effort requires an absolutely different set of muscles, and have called attention to examples of what I call exercise by the resistance method. You get exercise but not speed.

Get the right idea clearly in mind and you will be astonished at the distance you begin to get and the peculiar "feel" of the shot. You will get a smoothness which you never had before and you will connect very easily with your ball. Nat-

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urally you get the increased distance and the longer ball you require. Bear in mind that the slightest tendency to lift in any way is cutting down your power, because for every bit of "lift" you add, just so much "leaning upon the ball" is neutralized; or just so much weight is taken away from the blow. A little practice along these lines will soon train your muscles correctly and you will get the "feel" of the shot and after that the confidence will come quickly.

THE PART THE BODY PLAYS

CHAPTER XI

THE PART THE BODY PLAYS

ATTENTION has been directed to the position of the body in the address, and especially to the tilt of the body, which I have said must remain constant with reference to the ball, but this is easier said than done. It is very difficult to execute, but it is not difficult to understand, once the correct idea is grasped. It is immaterial to the player to know each particular bend and twist of the spinal column in order to accomplish this desirable object, as it will be sufficient that his purpose is to keep his body tilted at the angle I have shown.

The real point to grasp is the position of the left arm at the top of the swing. By reference to the figure you will see that the shoulders are not raised at all. The angle at which the body is tilted makes it look as though the right shoulder was raised, but it is not. The left arm

GOLF

is not raised above the right shoulder. To show that this is so I have made a drawing (Fig. 2) to show the positions as they would appear if the body was not tilted. In my own case it took me a long time to unlearn what I had read and been told about raising my arms and getting my club over my right shoulder. If the body is tilted properly there is very little, if any, tendency to

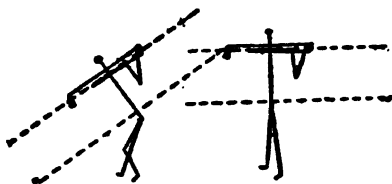


FIG. 1. FIG. 2.

raise the head and jump at the ball or duck the knees.

If the player can get through his head that there should be no "lunging" at the ball, but that the power should be developed by twisting the body, he will find that it does not take three or four years to hit the ball easily and get good distance. The fact that so many, practically all, players in the early stages endeavor to heave vio-

THE PART THE BODY PLAYS

lently at the ball shows that it must be their understanding of the stroke that is at fault and not the lack of the physical ability to drive the ball a good distance which is to blame.

It is a hard game, mighty hard, if you have to learn all these little factors from experience, but if the player can get the right idea in his mind the shots are not difficult to play. That is why so many golfers in talking about the game keep saying, "It is all mental," as though there was some mysterious gift which made a golfer of a man. I never took much stock in any method of playing a stroke which could not be explained, and I think the average golfer is built the same way. Of course, after a thousand attempts with as many different schemes for playing a shot, and still without success, a player is apt to despair, but he should not. Any man of average intelligence and physique can play shots as well as the best of them if he can get the correct basis to work upon into his head.

When you keep making a failure of a certain shot just stop and consider what you are doing and what you are trying to accomplish and don't

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try schemes unless you have a definite purpose in using them. By referring to Figure 1 you will understand why "keeping the head still" is the foundation of golf. If you move the head by raising up you destroy the whole plane upon which the swing is based and make the twist of the body act nearer the planes shown in Figure 2. If you try to use any lift at all in the stroke you can easily understand why you will be going over your ball, as any twisting motion that does not keep the body tilted is bound to be acting nearer the planes shown in Figure 2. If you attempt to gain power by using anything but the twist of the body, which you are forced to do when standing erect, or anywhere near erect, you can see that the twist will be wasted and you are compelled to use all your muscular energy to maintain your balance. If you attempt to strike the ball on any other plane or angle than the lower one, shown in Figure 1, you will find that the club is not built to connect with the ball on such a plane.

If you can learn to depend wholly upon the twist of the body to do the work, you cannot have

THE PART THE BODY PLAYS

any difficulty in keeping the head in one place, because if you will look at the cut you can see that twisting the body leaves the head in a direct line with the center of the circle or sweep. That is why I continually refer to the head as being the foundation of the stroke. I am merely trying to lead up to that fact from various points of view to impress upon players its true significance. You can also see that if you depend solely upon the twist of the body for power you cannot introduce a single lifting motion when you swing downward at the ball without destroying the relative position of the body toward the ball. The true pivotal center, therefore, is not a single spot between the shoulders, but a line running through the top of the head straight downward through the center of the body.

When it is remembered that the greatest speed is necessary the instant the club head meets the ball in order that the ball will not get away from the club head too soon, it will enable you to hold enough back to get this increased speed as you "go through" the ball. In short, you get a gradually increasing speed, not only to the club, but

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to the twist of the body, and to do that properly there should be no apparent effort to increase it. The power necessary to keep increasing the speed after it once starts is very little. If you start slowly, the same amount of power required to start, if maintained steadily, will make the club head and body move or twist around faster and faster, just as in the case of the familiar example of the child's merry-go-round. It starts slowly and the same amount of energy applied steadily gives an ever-increasing speed.

It is difficult, very difficult, for players to learn this apparently simple fact. It is very hard to swing easily, because the player cannot "feel" this gradually increasing speed. All players seem to think it is necessary to "feel" the power, and the only way that it is possible to "feel" it is to destroy the balance in some way in order that the energy being developed can react upon the frame. You will "feel" the power the instant you lose your balance in the slightest degree, and it is too bad you cannot transfer the sense of touch or feeling to the club head. If you could, you would quickly be educated to the

THE PART THE BODY PLAYS

correct idea. It is the energy which is transferred to the ball that counts, and the only way to get much transferred is to hit the ball perfectly true.

If the player will study continually how to eliminate every little detail which offers resistance, or which tends to destroy the balance in the slightest degree, he will quickly get upon the right track. This resolved into a simple formula is, cut out everything which is not comfortable. The ability to keep the balance comfortably is the measure of the amount of power you can use successfully.

Nine players out of ten lift their heads at the last instant. That does not add power to the stroke; on the contrary, it takes just that much power away from the blow. It is at the end of the stroke that you must "lean upon the ball," so to speak, because it is the weight added to the momentum of the club and following the blow which gives substance to it. Drive the ball down. If you hit down your weight is bound to follow into the blow.

THE VARDON GRIP

CHAPTER XII

THE VARDON GRIP

THE year I first took up golf and the first week I played I adopted the "Vardon grip," and I have never had occasion to change it. Each year I have only become more and more convinced of its advantages. Vardon was on his famous tour of the United States that year and photographs of his grip were published in the golf magazines, and that is where I first saw it.

I argued that as Vardon, Braid, and Taylor all used this grip, and they were the world's greatest golfers, they had probably given it a thorough tryout and were convinced of its merit.

Since I first started to work on my game that was one thing I never had trouble with, and I will give for the benefit of any who may not be familiar with it a description. The handle of the club, or grip, is grasped with the left hand, with the

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thumb pointing down the shaft at the center of the club head and with about a half inch of the shaft projecting back of the hand. The right hand is placed open underneath the shaft just ahead of the left hand toward the club head and the two middle fingers are brought upward against the shaft and then slid along toward the left hand until the finger next to the little finger touches the forefinger of the left hand and the two middle fingers are then folded part way around the shaft. The thumb of the right hand is then brought over the shaft and closed equally upon the second finger and the shaft at right angles to the shaft. The forefinger, or index finger, is then brought around under the shaft until the tip touches lightly the tip of the thumb. The little finger of the right hand is then closed equally upon the forefinger of the left hand and the third finger of the right hand.

I have found this grip to be an improvement over the orthodox grip for the following reasons: It prevents the shifting of the hands at the top of the grip, a very common fault with beginners. It curtails the freedom of the wrists and prevents



FIRST STAGE OF THE VARDON GRIP.



THE VARDON GRIP COMPLETED.



THE VARDON GRIP

the tendency to use the forearm too freely in the swing, as you can readily see by making the following experiment:

Place the two hands extended at arm's length together, the palm of the right hand up, the left hand down. Double the fists as you would in grasping a club by the orthodox method. Then observe that if you had a club in your hands you could make a half circle by turning the wrists and hands over so that the palm of the right hand is down and the left up. There is the greatest freedom in turning the wrists, and as the most common fault with beginners is using the arms to do the work which the shoulders, back, and legs are better fitted for, anything which helps to restrain the natural tendency in this direction as the Vardon grip does is beneficial. It will influence you unconsciously to utilize the more powerful muscles.

It has the further advantage of being a guide in bringing the hands and club back to the ball in the correct position as they were in the address, because you will find by a few experiments how awkward it is to get back to the ball from the top

GOLF

of your swing, using the "Vardon grip," in any other way than by turning on a perfect pivot. If you are compelled by the lack of freedom in the wrists to extend the arms fully to get any play at all in the wrists, it will be bound to reduce the tendency to pull in the arms too soon, and will thereby largely overcome the tendency to slice.

The same experiment I suggested above, which shows the freedom and play of the wrists in the orthodox grip, made with the Vardon grip, will show you how much this grip curtails the freedom of the wrists. In comparing the two methods the difference will be more noticeable if the hands are clenched tightly as you would in grasping a club. Then by bending the elbows slightly you will observe how extremely difficult it is to turn the wrists at all, keeping the hands tightly closed as in gripping a club. If the grip prevents turning the wrists freely and makes you extend the arms to turn them at all, naturally your shoulders will respond and begin to help.

Take a club in your hands and try lifting it up over your right shoulder, keeping the left arm

THE VARDON GRIP

firmly extended throughout and bending the right elbow sufficiently to pull the club over until the shaft touches the shoulder, and you will find you have equal freedom with both the orthodox and the "Vardon grip." In the raising and lowering of your club you need freedom, but any grip which causes you to rely upon twisting your shoulders around to get the sweep of the club and makes it extremely difficult to get any sweep at all in rolling the wrists is placing the burden of the work where it belongs. It will force you to turn the body to get around any distance with the shoulders. This is a very desirable result. This grip for the same reason makes it extremely difficult to finish the swing in any but a correct and complete turn of the body and shoulders, and naturally makes a good "follow through" imperative.

A very important advantage of the "Vardon grip" is the added firmness or control of the tendency of the club to twist in the hands as you strike the ball. This is due to the fact that the left thumb down the shaft with the base of the

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right thumb pressing on it acts as a brake, so to speak, and saves many a shot struck too near the toe of the club.

If you will make the experiment of drawing up your club to the top of your swing very slowly, using the Vardon grip, in the same manner as you would use with the orthodox grip, you will find it extremely awkward in the first place and lacking in the feel of power in the next place. This awkwardness and lack of the feeling of power have condemned the grip to many who have tried it superficially and unadvisedly, but if they had realized what a remarkably clever invention it is to carry a golfer over the difficult spots in the swing, they would never discard it, especially with such a criticism as I have heard frequently: "Oh, I could never get any power in my swing with that grip." This very remark shows the mental picture of such a player's stroke. He gets his power principally from his forearms and misses the freedom he gets with the orthodox grip.

Various reasons have been given to explain why Vardon, Taylor, Braid, and others, use this grip, but I have heard most frequently the one that

THE VARDON GRIP.

because their hands are so large they are compelled by that fact to adopt the grip. If it is so beneficial to a man with large hands, I fail to see the logic in the inference that it would not be beneficial to a man with small hands as well. A man with small hands is presumed to have less strength in them than the man with large hands. A firmer grip would seem to be a decided benefit.

It is when you come to play the irons that you will find the "Vardon grip" of the greatest benefit. The more perfect control of the club and the restraining action on the freedom of the wrists from turning over too freely will give material results when you are trying to keep a good line. As an illustration of the better control of the Vardon grip and ability to place and direct the club with accuracy, make the following experiment: Take a nail and drive it into a board until it will hold its position. Then take your cleek and attempt to drive that nail farther into the board with the bottom of the club with each grip. You will observe the better control of the overlapped grip if you will strike a good, firm blow on the nail. With the left thumb down the shaft, as in

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the Vardon grip, the club shaft and left arm are more in line and form one continuous shaft from the shoulder to the club head, and the left arm is the arm to watch in golf.

PLAYING THE CLEEK



CHAPTER XIII

PLAYING THE CLEEK

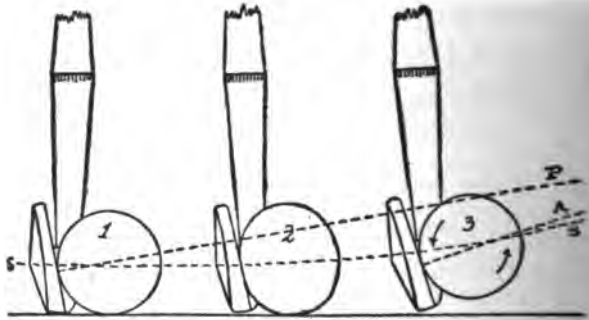
THE designers of clubs have produced a model which takes care of the difference in the nature of the blow to be struck with a cleek and with a wooden club by "lofting" or inclining the face of the club more, which causes the ball to rise more quickly, as well as higher. Also by reason of a shorter and stiffer shaft the arc of the sweep is sharper or less "flat." That is to say, the design of the club will take care of all the differences without any effort of the player at all. The same effort and the same "timing," as in wooden shots, will get the desired result. Leave all the changes to be made to the club.

The one great fault with poor iron players is that they swing so hard and fast that the club does not have a chance and no accurate blow is possible with such a violent effort. As the shaft is stiffer the weight goes into the blow quicker or the reac-

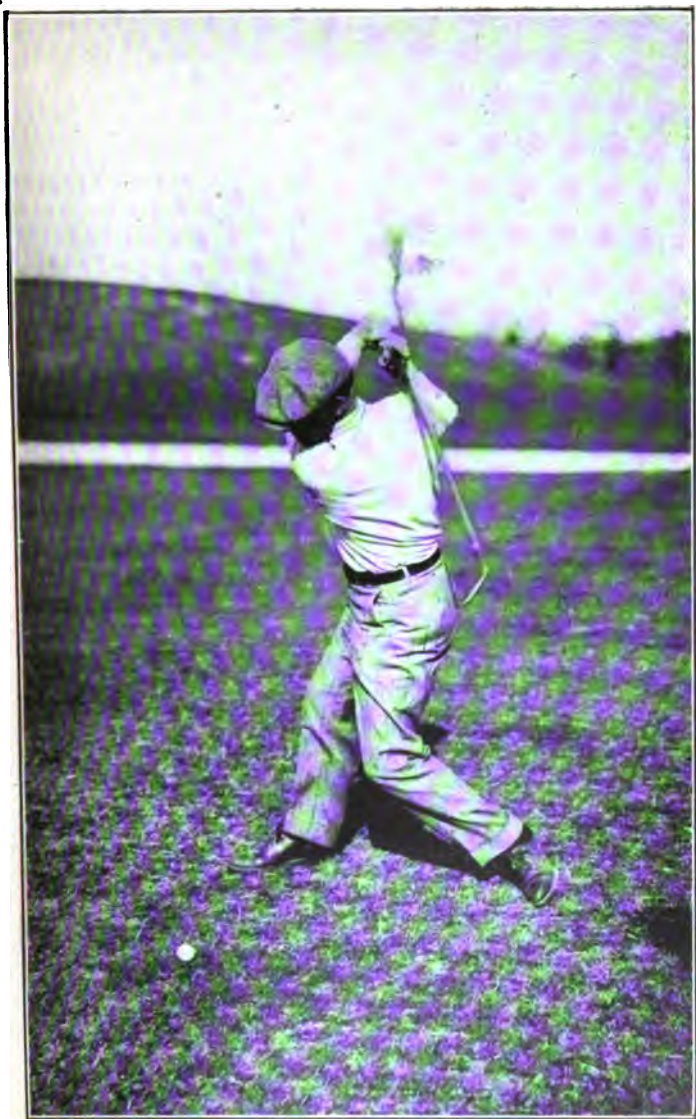
GOLF

tion of the shaft is quicker once you connect with the ball.

I have drawn a sketch showing the theoretical as well as actual result of playing a cleek with the same style of stroke as used with a driver, that is, by picking it off the ground clean. In position



1 I have shown the cleek against the ball and drawn a dotted line marked P at perfect right angles to the face which is the line along which the ball should rise theoretically. I have also shown by the dotted line S the arc of the sweep when perfectly described with the hands moving parallel with the line of flight with the whole leverage of the blow extending from the pivotal center between the shoulders. In position 3 is shown the club at the instant the ball is leaving it,



TOP OF THE SWING FOR A FULL CLEEK SHOT.



PLAYING THE CLEEK

and you will see by dotted line marked A the actual line or angle of rise; the line is drawn at perfect right angles to the club face. This, remember, gives a very high ball without turning up the club face with the hands, but by simply propelling the club forward as low as you can.

By referring to position 1 you will notice that the club touches the ball below the center and also that the distance between that point of contact and the ground is very little, giving but a very small latitude for error in hitting the ball. For instance, if the club is not well down to the ball—is even as little as a quarter of an inch too high—you are sure to have a three-quarter or half topped ball, and by reference to position 2 you will readily understand what a loss of power will result, because the weight of the club head does not go into the ball; the shock of the blow is taken up by the shaft and not by the ball. This results in that uncomfortable “feel” which a three-quarter topped ball gives.

If the blow is delivered a quarter of an inch too low the club strikes the ground several inches too far back and a partly scuffed ball is the re-

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sult, due to the blow being wasted on the ground partly and partly to the fact that the dirt and grass get between the club face and the ball, deadening the blow.

As the rebound of the ball is so much more rapid from metal than from wood the ball is actually in contact with the club face a very much smaller period of time. The sharper blow is given by the design of the club as I have explained and the whole distance depends entirely upon the first impulse or sharpness of the blow. This method is by long odds the most difficult way of playing the club, as it gives so little latitude for error and so little time to deliver the power due to the quick rebound from the metal face. As it is the theory of the average golfer I have taken it up here in order to demonstrate how little this way compares with the way a professional plays his cleek.

The vast majority of spoiled cleek shots are topped, for the reason that it is almost impossible to avoid topping when you consider how little space you have to get "down" to the ball. By again referring to the diagram you will observe

PLAYING THE CLEEK

that the dotted line P, drawn at right angles to the club face as shown in position 1, marks the highest point which the club can reach and not half top the ball, while the ground is the boundary, below which the club cannot go without wasting the strength of the blow or scuffling the stroke. As a matter of fact, there is even less latitude for a well-hit ball.

More important than this is the fact that you have practically no latitude as regards the arc or sweep of the club. The ball must be met absolutely at the lowest point in the sweep of the club to get the best distance, because the club face is tilted at the same angle that a hoe is when drawn toward the one using it, and feeds into the ground if it meets with resistance. In the illustration I have shown the club meeting the ball under ideal conditions with that scheme of playing it, and with the eyes and pivotal center at perfect right angles to the ball.

The pivotal center between the shoulders governs the lowest point in the arc or sweep of the club, as I have shown in other chapters, and in order to meet your ball at the lowest point in the

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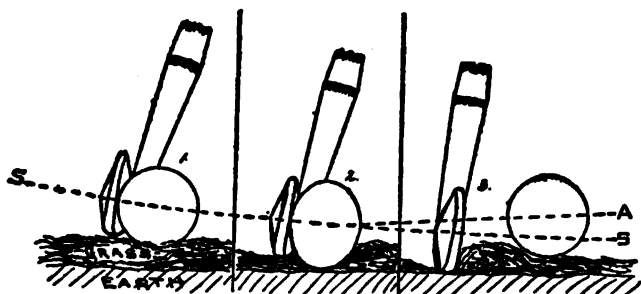
circle, or sweep, the center between the shoulders must be opposite the ball. Falling back from the direction you are trying to send the ball will not get the club "down" to the ball, but on the contrary will top the ball. You cannot possibly help it, because the club is on its upward travel, due to your having shifted the pivotal center to the right and back of the ball.

Many players have a habit of "facing the club in" in addressing iron shots. This is the result of a desire on the part of the player to "square" the club face with the line he is to send the ball along, and unless he commits some other neutralizing fault the ball is bound to be "hooked" or pulled off the line. All these schemes are wrong, and it is because they require the player to tamper with his swing that they are very objectionable. In any event they yield but a temporary improvement, if any, and in the long run are worse than useless because they make it necessary to "unlearn" them, which is very hard to do.

The idea in the player's mind should be to take his stance in such a manner that the lowest point in his swing will be about five inches ahead of his

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ball, in order that he will be sure to connect with the ball while still on the downward sweep. If the hands, in the address, are directly opposite the lowest point in the swing, as they should be, and the club face is against the ball (which is five inches behind the lowest point) the player will find that in order to have the club face at right angles to the line of flight when it reaches the



lowest point in the arc or sweep that the face must turn away to the right when addressing the ball. By referring to the diagram, position 1, this point is very plain. Position 3 shows that the club face is squared to the line of flight at the time the ball leaves it, and this is why the ball goes straight.

As the club face is turned away slightly in the

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address it should be turned away still more as the club is drawn back, and this turning should continue as far as you can to the top of the swing. As the club returns to the ball it should connect as it did in the address, and the turn be continued as is shown in the illustration. The turn is not stopped when position 3 is reached, but is continued to the end of the stroke. One of the great difficulties in playing the cleek as well as the other irons is that players do not make this turn, but endeavor to keep the club face squared throughout; this not only destroys much of the vigor and snap in the stroke, but absolutely prevents freedom of the play of the muscles.

Players are prone to believe that the ball will go off from the proper line if they do not keep the club face squared. This is not the secret. If the club is traveling along a straight line while in contact with the ball, it makes little difference if the face of the club is not exactly squared, because the ball responds to the greatest force working upon it. If that force is being exerted along a certain line the slight imperfection of the club face being pointed a little to the right or left at

PLAYING THE CLEEK

the moment of contact will not affect the stroke very considerably. Players are apt to believe that making this turn complicates the scheme, but a few trials will soon convince them that it really simplifies the stroke.

In addressing the ball remember that in using the method shown in the cut the "aim" is to drive the ball downward. Do not be afraid that your club is going too deep into the ground, because it cannot; as the shaft is shorter than that of the driver, it comes away from the ground quicker, and the one thing to consider is the fact that ninety per cent of all cleek shots by those who cannot play them are topped. Just pound the ball into the ground and put your shoulders into it. That will do the trick.

In properly starting any scheme for playing a shot with the cleek, it is of vital importance to understand thoroughly just what happens to the ball or how the transmission of energy to it from the club head affects its flight. I have shown by illustration why a glancing blow or a blow struck with a club with an inclined or lofted face is lacking in power, due partly to the ball skidding on

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the surface of the metal club, partly to the fact that the ball bounces away quicker, being compressed less, and partly to the fact that it requires far more accuracy to get the contact exactly in the middle of the club face, on account of the very small latitude for error when attempting to play the cleek as you would your driver, picking the ball off the turf clean without injuring or cutting it.

Right at this point I might say that the "greens committees" of the best kept courses in the country have not the slightest objections to players taking any sized divot or piece of turf they desire. What they do object to is carelessness in not replacing it. If you replace the turf it will grow again, hardy as ever. If you knock the divot into such small pieces that you cannot find them you should tramp the edges of the cut in the turf down tight in order that the grass which is hanging loose will grow again. If that is done the grass will grow over the cut and soon fill it up, because it is the nature of grass to protect its roots.

Many experiments and a great many thousands



**'ADDRESS WITH MID-IRON OR CLEEK FOR THE
"PICKED" SHOT.**



PLAYING THE CLEEK

of dollars have been spent by the different governments in trying to develop a shell which will not "skid" or glance off the armor of vessels. The power in the shell or momentum and weight are amply sufficient to penetrate the heavy steel plates if the blow can be concentrated, and this they have accomplished by putting a soft nose around the point of the shell. The same principle governs the contact of the ball on the face of the cleek and other irons, and to pick a ball off the turf clean requires an exactness of skill which is beyond the ability of even the professionals, and they would get but a small part of the power into the ball if they used that method.

I have shown in the diagram on page 181 (Position 2) the grass piled up in front of the ball but not that which the club picks up on each side. When it is considered how quickly the grass is cut and packed on each side of the ball it will be readily understood what a brace or support is given to prevent any of the power being wasted by the ball sliding sideways in either direction. Also it will be noticed that if there is any slipping or yielding up or down it will not be up because

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the face of the club is inclined forward. This is the reason that so much more power is transferred to the ball when taking turf as against picking the ball off the ground clear.

It should be borne in mind that this extra power comes purely from the method of making the shot and by reason of the action of the grass or turf and not from an extra heave in the swing. I have already drawn attention to the fact that the club shaft is shorter than that of the driver, thereby reducing the leverage of the club and making it possible to get up speed very quickly. This should be kept in mind because the prevailing fault of the majority of golfers is "hitting too soon." Then the fact that the club is designed to enable the player to swing faster, as the blow must be sharper than with a wooden club, should warn the player to use every endeavor to hold back and not make such an effort as he would with a wooden shot, where it requires more strength.

The very fact that an iron shot is required is sufficient evidence that the time for greater accuracy is at hand, and there is no hope for the player

PLAYING THE CLEEK

who is trying to make "beef" or brute strength do what he should use a wooden shot for. The day the player masters his desire for distance with cleek shots is the day he begins to bring them off.

Previous chapters have demonstrated that hitting too hard is the cause of "hitting too soon," and as the length of the club shaft enables the player to swing a cleek faster than a driver it is sure that the fault of "hitting too soon" is emphasized by the average player in consequence. This fact when properly driven home should convince him that it should "feel" as though he is not making enough effort when he is swinging correctly. There is little chance that the player has not made his maximum effort heretofore, and if he has the proper mental equipment it should be possible for him to go out the next time he tries his cleek and swing freely and easily with his whole mind given to seeing his ball clearly from the start of his swing until he connects with the ball, never shifting his glance for an instant.

One thing I have found to be of assistance to me in getting the power into a cleek shot is to

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forget that I have hands and attempt to hit with the shoulders. In other words, when you start down toward your ball let the shoulders lean on the ball, so to speak, and have your hands drag along behind. Do not attempt to control the club with the hands so much, but allow the shoulders to get into the stroke. Put your entire attention upon keeping your head still and swing easily, almost lazily.

Very few players really use a cleek at the right time. In the majority of cases they should take their brassey, because the distance they are trying for is beyond their skill with a cleek. To use a cleek well it is essential that the player be sure of his line, and if he is not he had much better play a brassey and take it more easily. The trouble is that a player who is master of a cleek will reach a green of say one hundred and eighty to two hundred yards with a fine line to the pin; and then because he has done so, another player standing by who uses a cleek indifferently will attempt the same shot when the distance is beyond him. It is a peculiar fact that players keep trying to force themselves beyond their capacity, and

PLAYING THE CLEEK

there seems to be a tendency on the part of all players in the early stages of the game to try to make up in brute strength what they lack in skill.

There are varieties of shots which it is possible to bring off with the cleek, such as hooked shots, sliced shots, push shots, etc., but I consider that it would only confuse beginners to mention them at this time. The finest shot of all is the one which goes on a dead straight line for the pin and never wavers in its flight. It is the only one which the beginner should attempt. In learning it he will perform the first two I speak of and will be able to play them when necessary once he has mastered the perfectly straight ball.

The best professional in the field would find it extremely difficult to bring off a shot with the complicated scheme of the average amateur. The average amateur has too many things on his mind. He is fearful he will not hit his ball, and immediately begins a series of maneuvers which usually accomplish the very thing he is most anxious to avoid. If you keep your head still every instant occupied in making your swing, so

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as to see the ball clearly, and do not try to kill it, but merely swing in an easy, comfortable manner, you will find that it will accomplish more than hours spent upon your grip, your stance, or the hundred things the average player has on his mind.

I do not mean to hurry your stroke, but I do think that a player's common sense should tell him that he is tiring his muscles by posing in front of his ball and destroying the very elements which bring off the shot successfully. The professional has no finer brain capacity than the amateur, and golf is not a brain fatiguing pastime. The difficulty is that the player endeavors to make a brain-racking game of it instead of a muscular exercise where the freedom of the play of the muscles is cultivated. Perseverance on a rigid, fixed method of play is not evidence of a superior quality of mind, but of pig-headedness.

Remember I do not urge that you use my schemes of play, but I am calling attention to facts which cannot be ignored. Golf is only a very difficult game because players make it so. The reforms in your method of play must be

PLAYING THE CLEEK

thought out at times when you are not trying to hit a ball, when your whole attention should be devoted to seeing clearly every instant what you are trying to hit. All your calculations are based upon the idea that you hit your ball true, and when you do not do this the remedy is not in making more calculations. Cut out some of them and concentrate upon the simplest.

Back of all bad shots is the monumental egotism which makes you believe you can make up in effort what you lack in skill. If you get only fifty yards and can put it where you intend to you are master of that shot. The foolish desire to equal a more experienced and skilful player will be your master if you will allow it. Perseverance and patience will accomplish what you desire.

The particular point to which I wish to call players' attention in playing the cleek is the matter of how the effort should "feel" when properly played. The real gage of the effort you can make successfully is your ability to keep your eyes on the ball without shifting the glance for the slightest instant. When you make the stroke

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and accomplish this it "feels" as though you would never get any distance at all. As a matter of fact it is one of the most difficult clubs to learn for this very reason. It does not seem as though you could obtain anything like the distance with a cleek when played this way that you do with the brassey because it "feels" so differently, but learn to swing very easily with your cleek and hit the ball absolutely true and it will soon convince you what wonderful distance the little apparent effort gives.

The effort, as a matter of fact, is the same. The same amount of energy is generated by an effort which "feels" in the case of the cleek about one-half of what you use in the brassey shot. The reason is that the club shaft, being shorter, responds more quickly to the effort and as the swing itself is shorter, or should be, there is no strain upon the body and legs to get to the top of the swing as in the wooden shots, and this makes it "feel" that you are not applying enough power. When you realize fully that the swing is so much faster with the cleek than with the wooden shots, it should bring home the fact that



**ADDRESS WITH MID-IRON AND CLEEK FOR THE SQUEEZE
SHOT. NOTE THAT THE LOWEST POINT IN THE SWING
WILL BE AHEAD OF THE BALL.**

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PLAYING THE CLEEK

you are very likely to get the club to the ball with the arms alone, ahead of the heavy muscles of the back and shoulders. There is no earthly use, as I explained in discussing the wooden shots, in trying to have the arms do the work. There is not enough power in them. Unless the heavy and slower-moving muscles get into the stroke you will get no distance.

I give here my scheme of addressing the ball, which is the simplest I can devise for my own use. I stand with my right foot advanced a little more than in the address with the driver because I wish to shorten my swing a little. The hands are to the left of the center line, or line between the eyes and the ball, and I assume that stance because it brings the pivotal center between the shoulders and the hands exactly opposite the lowest point in the sweep, which is about four to five inches ahead of the ball as it is shown. In making the stroke shown in the photograph opposite page 200, showing the follow through, the tape shown was cut in two about four inches ahead of the center line, after connecting with the ball. In other words, I get my distance entirely on the

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first bounce and not on the carry. As the ball is driven downward against the turf the carry is about two inches and the bulk of the distance is obtained on the first rebound. When the ball is picked off the turf the carry is greatest.

The difference is that the club head stays against the ball at right angles to the direction the power is being applied during the carry and part of the rebound, making a longer period of contact which gives an additional quantity of energy. Remember that this extra energy is not applied by an extra effort but purely from the way you play it. You are merely applying the energy to better advantage.

One mistake that a great many golfers make is in taking their gage from the top of the club instead of the bottom. All iron clubs I have seen are wider at the toe than at the heel, and this makes it look as though the club was facing much farther to the right than it really does. It should be remembered also that the bottom of the swing is ahead of the ball and that the hands are to turn the face of the club in as the ball is in contact with it, until the club face is at exact right

PLAYING THE CLEEK

angles to the line of flight at the point where the ball leaves the club head. If the ball is addressed with the club face at exact right angles to the line of flight, it will hook the ball to the left if the hands are turned properly, and if they are not turned the ball is bound to be sliced.

In observing a good professional player you can always get the angles he uses if you will get in a position in direct line with a line drawn between his eyes and the ball. You will note that he has his hands to the left of such a line if you are behind him and to the right of that line if viewed from in front of him. The bulk of the weight when on the flat of the feet is directly opposite the point at the lowest part of the sweep and where it will do the most good.

In making this stroke or any other style of stroke, remember that unless the club head is traveling along the line of flight while in contact with the ball, the ball won't go along that line, and your entire effort is simplified if you can stretch the length of the arc of travel in order that the timing may be easier. In other words, the longer you can make the club head travel

GOLF

along that line the surer you will be of the ball going along the same line. Also, if the hands are not moving parallel with that line the club head cannot stay upon that line. This should enable the player to work out his own scheme to accomplish the purpose.

In practicing with the cleek I have found it to be a very decided advantage to practice hitting the ball true in the center of the club face and make no attempt to get over fifty to seventy-five yards. If you will have a piece of soft chalk handy and chalk the face of the club you will be able to observe just where you connect with the ball and soon get the gage. It is as necessary to educate the muscles to the correct gage as the eyes, because the eyes must be governed by the muscles in the end. It is no easy matter to hit a cleek shot perfectly true for even that distance, as the player will soon learn when he tries it.

I have found in my own case that when driving the ball with the cleek a distance of, say, fifty yards, I let the weight of the club alone do the work and merely guide it. This is fine practice in learning to turn the hands over correctly as

PLAYING THE CLEEK

well as in grazing the turf after hitting downward through the ball. There is not much of a divot taken; it is more as though you were cutting the grass off at the roots after going through the ball. No attempt should be made to send the ball high, because that will take care of itself when you hit harder. In addition to this I practice with the idea of letting my arms swing freely and make no attempt to use the body. The idea in this is to accustom the arms to work correctly in guiding the club and swinging smoothly. Then when I have succeeded in training the muscles to the correct swing and rhythm of the stroke, I find that it comes perfectly natural to get away a fine, long, low ball with a tremendous run.

I notice that I soon acquire the habit of watching my ball intently until the club head meets it, and I also find that I get the best results when I keep my head absolutely rigid. This was the scheme which made me learn to rely upon the cleek, and when it is properly used it will totally outclass any spoon shot ever invented. A spoon is not versatile. You cannot play a fine low ball

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into the wind with it nor will it get you out of the difficult lies with the accuracy that a cleek will. Because a player may get a better ball with a spoon is no evidence that the spoon is the better club inherently. It shows only that the player has not learned his cleek. Once master your cleek and you can play all the other irons without any trouble. Using the spoon necessitates the same care and attention that would be used to master the next iron in line, and that is the midiron. In my own experience I have never seen a spoon player who played a really fine midiron shot. There was always a tendency to get a bad line.

Every player of experience has of course remarked the great difference between the professionals and the amateurs, and it is in the irons that the former excel so markedly. A cleek in their hands is as accurate and will put the ball against the pin as well as the midiron or mashie, and when it is considered that it is in the distance they are designed to send the ball and not direction that they differ, the player will grasp the fact that he is woefully lacking when he cannot put the cleek on as good a line as he would the

PLAYING THE CLEEK

mashie. In fact, the mashie is the more difficult club inherently to control.

Players who know can tell you that they cannot force a mashie shot and keep their line, but these same players are not aware, practically, that they force both their midiron and cleek. If they were to use the same self-control in playing their cleek that they do in playing their mashie they would quickly see how much they are forcing their cleek shots. The same easy swing they use on their mashie would give them a beautiful long ball, purely from the difference in the design of the club, due to the greater leverage and the straight face. Every one knows how easily he can get one hundred yards with a mashie, and yet it cannot be brought home that the same effort exactly will produce with a cleek from fifty to ninety yards more, simply from the design of the club. It does not require one ounce more power.

A fact that I would like to draw attention to in playing the cleek, and it is the same exactly with the other irons, is the matter of the fore-arms and wrists and the greater extent to which

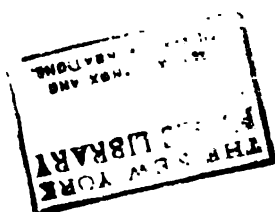
GOLF.

these enter into the playing of irons than with the wooden shots. The wooden shots are really sweep strokes, with the forearm doing comparatively little work at the instant of contact with the ball, while with irons it is the forearms which put the ginger into the stroke at the last instant; this is because turf must be taken and the shorter circle is necessary. By this I mean that in the wooden shots, with the club once under way, it is as though the arms were flabby or held loosely, and the swing made from the shoulder with the arms just sweeping along to keep up with the club head, while with irons the arms are held a little more firmly or the muscles tightened slightly so that a sharper and shorter circle can be performed by pivoting the bulk of the stroke upon the left wrist.

It is as though the circle or sweep was being performed with the club only, with the circle pivoting upon the left wrist while you sweep the arms along only enough to bring the hands into position as the club head reaches the ball. The reason for doing this is that you use, or should use, a shorter swing with irons, as your shaft is



**FOLLOW THROUGH WITH THE CLEEK, USING THE SQUEEZE
SHOT. (SEE PAGE 193).**



PLAYING THE CLEEK

shorter than with wooden clubs and you can get up speed more quickly with the same amount of energy. The shorter swing enables you to be more accurate since your weight is on both feet longer because you do not have to turn so far around.

If you will take the trouble to observe the average professional's forearm development you will know that the forearms are doing a great deal of work. The forearms of the average amateur are used mostly in a death grip upon the club and their power is not utilized in making the short circle I have just described. Stiff arms but flexible wrists make for good iron play. Meeting the turf with stiffened wrists means a great shock to the frame, and the natural result is that the player on his next attempt tries to "pick" the ball off the turf, and I have already demonstrated that this is not only the hardest way because of the greater accuracy required, but it is absolutely impossible to get as long a ball, as it bounces away quicker. The resultant lack of distance means an almost sure attempt to swing harder in the next shot to get more distance, and the in-

GOLF

evitable result of that is failure to hit the ball true.

Now the rule in the playing of irons is to keep the wrists limber and free, while in the sweep stroke with wooden clubs the reverse is the case; the wrists should be stiff to make one continuous shaft from shoulder to club head.

The reason, in my opinion, why so few amateurs play the cleek well is because they attempt to play with stiffened wrists, as they would with the wooden shots. Another reason is that they do not use light enough clubs. A heavy cleek is hard to swing fast with the forearms, because they are not strong enough to keep the club up with the shoulders and when a player once "feels" this he tries to swing as he does with the heavier wooden clubs. It is a peculiar fact, and yet not peculiar if you analyze it, that players who use light clubs are much more inclined to depend upon the forearms than those who use the heavy ones, and the reason is obvious.

Another item which should not be lost sight of is the fact that the wrists are not covered with muscles at all but are made principally of bone,

PLAYING THE CLEEK

ligaments, and tendons; and the muscles which hold the wrists firm are located in the forearm. Therefore, if you stiffen any of the muscles of the forearm you have no play, and if you have no play of those muscles the forearms do not enter into the stroke and you are compelled to fall back entirely upon the twist of the body when you do not need any such great amount of power. You need only a small part of the twist of the body, because the speed of the club depends upon your ability to get the club into position.

The fact is that you need but a very short twist of the body and a good stiff dose of forearms to make up for the slow-moving body. This can only be accomplished with free and active play of the muscles of the forearms. You can get much more power from the twist of the body than from any other source, but it does not move fast enough for cleek play when not supported by the forearms. The forearms act as the transformer, changing the low voltage, powerful current of the slow-moving body and arms into high tension current and speed when transmitted to the club shaft. Let this matter sink into your under-

GOLF

standing of cleveland and iron play and you will have learned one of the best ways to keep your head still when you are playing irons.

With the majority of beginners the effort to "kill" the ball begins even before the club reaches the top of the swing as the club is on its way upward, and their bodies have made the effort before the fingers and forearms can get the club started downward again. As the greatest power is in the body they naturally try to use that first, and in nine cases out of ten they use more power than their grip of fingers can transmit to the club. Naturally the club head lags behind the point where it should be when the great power of the legs, back, and shoulders is applied. The entire effort should "feel" to be in the hands, as the body travels comparatively slowly in following around, because it is in the hands that the greatest strain at any one point is felt. Any sudden jerk or extra effort made with the body will apply power out of all proportion to the strength of the fingers to transmit it. Therefore, it inevitably follows that nothing like the full

PLAYING THE CLEEK

strength can possibly be used, due to this proportionate weakness in the fingers.

If the right hand was grasping the club half way down the shaft with the left hand at the end of the grip it would be possible to use the greatest amount of power in twisting the body around, just as this strength is used in swinging a pickax. But with a golf club the hands are close together, and the power applied with the legs, back, and shoulders that you would use in swinging a pickax is so totally out of proportion to the ability of the hands to transmit under the circumstances, that the stroke must inevitably be ruined. If you were to swing a pickax with the hands grasping the handle at the end, close together, and start to bring it to the top of the swing as you do in golf, you would be quickly convinced, when you reached the top and started to bring it down again suddenly, how little power proportionately you have in the hands; yet golfers are trying all the time to make the same amount of exertion with their legs, back and shoulders that they would in swinging a pickax and then marvel at the

GOLF

difficulty in getting off a long ball, when the whole effort is wasted because the club head does not meet the ball true.

Keep the forearms and wrist as flexible as possible, and you will be astonished to find how little power is required of the body. It is easy and very comfortable and you quickly learn the valuable lesson of hitting the ball accurately, because as your body is so well under control you have no difficulty in keeping your balance, and that means your head has a good chance to keep from swaying, and naturally your eyes see the ball so much more clearly that it is comparatively easy to hit it very true. Then you will begin to get the distance. As a matter of fact the playing of irons requires no such effort as the wooden shots, and the great difficulty, as I have said before, is in keeping from swinging or twisting the body too fast. The principle of the stroke is different and it is more like the game of "crack the whip," which the boys play. The entire energy is transmitted to the club head and it is more than sufficient if you connect with the ball accurately. A point to remember is the matter of

PLAYING THE CLEEK

moving the hands along parallel with the ball after you first connect with it in order to keep the face of the club at right angles and the club head on the line of flight.

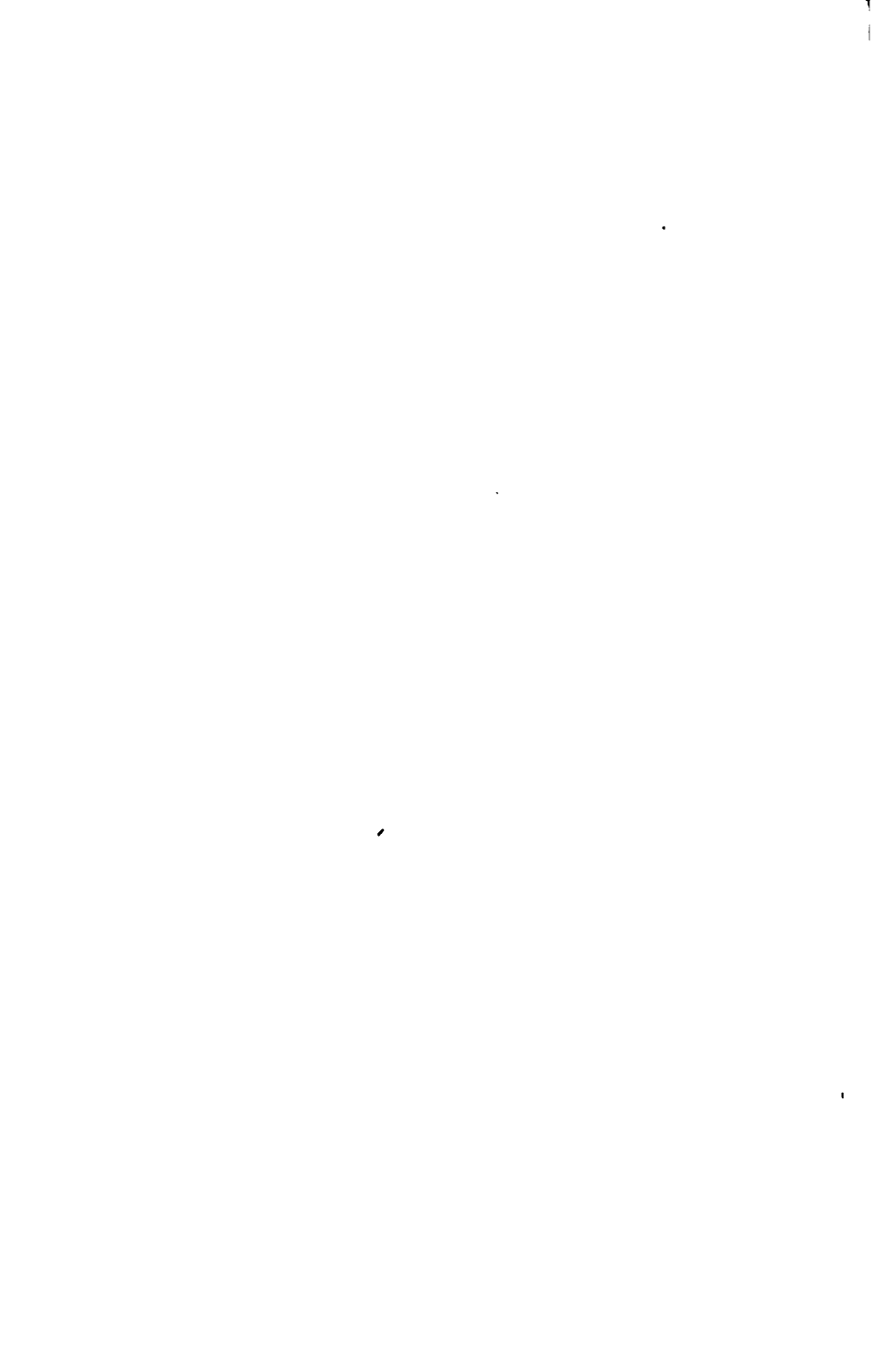
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THE MIDIRON SHOT



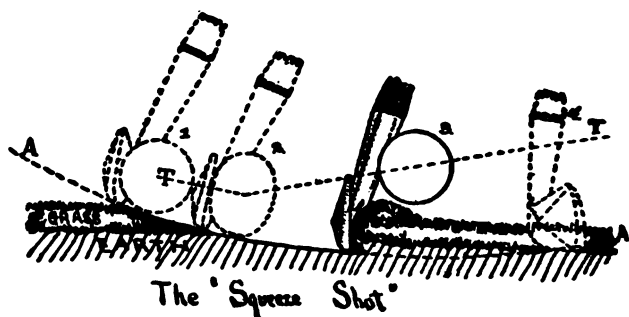
CHAPTER XIV

THE MIDIRON SHOT

FIRST cousin to the cleek is the midiron, and yet the master of the former may have something to learn about the use of the latter. In the diagram I show how the midiron is used by the professionals and all those who "take turf" after "going through" the ball. A thing which has a most decided influence upon the ball is the fact that the club face is more at right angles or less lofted in relation to the ground and meets the ball at the same angle or loft that the driver does and naturally a longer ball results. The ball is lifted or sent into the air by its rebound from the "springy" turf, due in part to the fact that the club is coming downward, forcing the ball against the ground, and partly to the fact that, the ball, being collapsed or compressed, as shown in position 2, the natural expansion of the ends, especially the lower end, for it becomes

GOLF

an oval, meets with resistance which upon reaction emphasizes the bounce upward. Besides this you have the pressure under the ball of the turf, which has been cut, forcing the ball up sharply, which aids materially in overcoming the back spin.



In playing this shot the player must remember that instead of looking at the ball and taking the gage of it as though he were driving it up, he must realize that it should look to him as though he were actually driving the ball into the ground four or five inches ahead of position 1, and in order to make the shot successfully he must really try to accomplish this. By noting the dotted line T, which shows the line of travel of the ball, you will see that the ball does actually start down, but

THE MIDIRON SHOT

it bounces away and forward before the club comes up again. The club still keeps onward and down until it reaches position 8. The idea should be to cut into the earth below the roots of the grass but lightly and not to bury the club into the turf after hitting the ball.

The whole success of the stroke depends upon the player connecting with the ball before the club reaches the bottom of the swing in order that the lowest point in the swing will be about four or five inches ahead of the ball.

The club, while being faced off to the right in the address, must be turned in as well, and if the illustration is viewed as though dotted line A, showing the arc of the club, was running parallel with the printing upon this page, he will see that it makes a new base line, which will give the same view of the club and ball as in the "picked shot." The difference in the scheme of play, however, is that here you have the whole width of the club face to allow for error instead of one-quarter of an inch, as you have in the "picked shot." The ball can be practically half topped, and yet go off on a good line, because the ground forces the ball

GOLF

up on to the center of the club face before the club reaches position 8. If you come down too low to the ball the shot will not be badly spoiled, because much of the power will be transmitted to the ball before the club meets the earth. You will not get quite as much distance, but that will be the only difference.

A large part of the difference between professionals and amateurs in playing this club is in the matter of direction. No stronger object lesson can be had than to notice the painstaking, careful finish to the stroke when the professional makes his shot and the reckless heave for distance of the amateur. The predominating idea of each player is plain to be seen. One tries solely for direction and the other only for distance. If the ball goes straight it is an accident in the latter case. Even those players who hit the ball are apparently satisfied if they come within twenty yards of the line aimed at.

The general trouble is the foolish pride players seem to take in reaching a green with the midiron, when in reality it is a cleek shot, with great care to be dead on the line. Of course it is possible

THE MIDIRON SHOT

to reach a green many times with a midiron by forcing it, where you can reach the same green and be sure of your direction by using a cleek. A midiron was originally designed to obtain one hundred and thirty-five yards with the old hard ball, and because the ball has become livelier players seem to feel that they should get one hundred and eighty to two hundred yards with the same club. So they can, but there is no merit in so forcing the club.

To bring this lesson home, the next time you go out on the course observe the results that players get and you will find ninety per cent of midiron shots are short, most of them never reaching the green, and the next point you will notice is that they are away off the line as well as short. If you will try the experiment of using your cleek every time you think you have a full midiron shot and put your attention to hitting your ball absolutely true you will make a curious discovery; not five per cent of a hundred shots will be over, and of that five per cent not one-half will be as far over as you are accustomed to be short with your midiron.

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Players will often boast that they have reached a certain green with a drive and a midiron, when the real point is that they were so surprised at the fact themselves that it was worthy of comment. How much oftener they will reach that same green easily with a drive and a cleek, and not be required to force either shot. It is the number of strokes used in playing a hole and not the number of yards that counts. I know from experience that the tendency is to try for distance, and only repeated failures have driven home the lesson that it is the accuracy you obtain in playing whatever distance you are capable of which makes lower scores. When you comment upon a really well-played hole, one which leaves the most lasting impression, the real fact is that you have placed your iron shot close enough to get down in one putt. No one cares whether you used a mashie or a cleek.

How many times a player will take a club to play safe—to avoid the risk of getting into a bunker, say—and then swing easily and carefully at the ball, hit it perfectly true, and find himself in the very difficulty he was trying to avoid!

THE MIDIRON SHOT

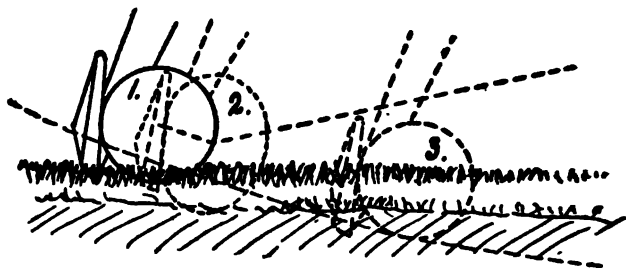
This has happened to many players, and their surprise is usually very great. They say: "Why, I played that safe on purpose, and there I am in the bunker." The fact is that the player is not familiar with the distance he obtains with a correctly hit ball. He so seldom hits a ball really true that he is not accustomed to see it go so far.

That is the one thing to learn, hit the ball true! It doesn't make much difference whether your grip is right or wrong according to some theories, or whether your swing is upright or flat, if the club meets the ball with the center of the face, that ball is going to go off pretty well.

I have observed that those players who have trouble in playing the midiron will invariably try to pick the ball up or off the ground clean, with the idea of not injuring the turf. Many players who get off a fairly good ball, but with a slice, have the same mental picture or they would not swing as they do. I have shown how the "squeeze shot," as I call that which takes turf after going through the ball, should be played. For the benefit of those who want an easy scheme for play-

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ing it I have made a sketch of what they should try to do. The idea is to let them play the shot as they are accustomed to do in every detail except that of purpose. That purpose should be to drive the ball into the ground, as is shown in position 3. The ball is supposed to be held up by the grass, and the only object the player should have in mind is to drive the ball into the ground



as suggested. The ball will actually follow along the dotted line which shows its flight, but that should not alter the player's purpose.

The great difficulty with players is that they cannot bring themselves to believe that the ball will get up, and at the last instant, before hitting it, they change their purpose and try to hit up. Any one can see this by watching a player who has trouble with his midiron. This is a habit

THE MIDIRON SHOT

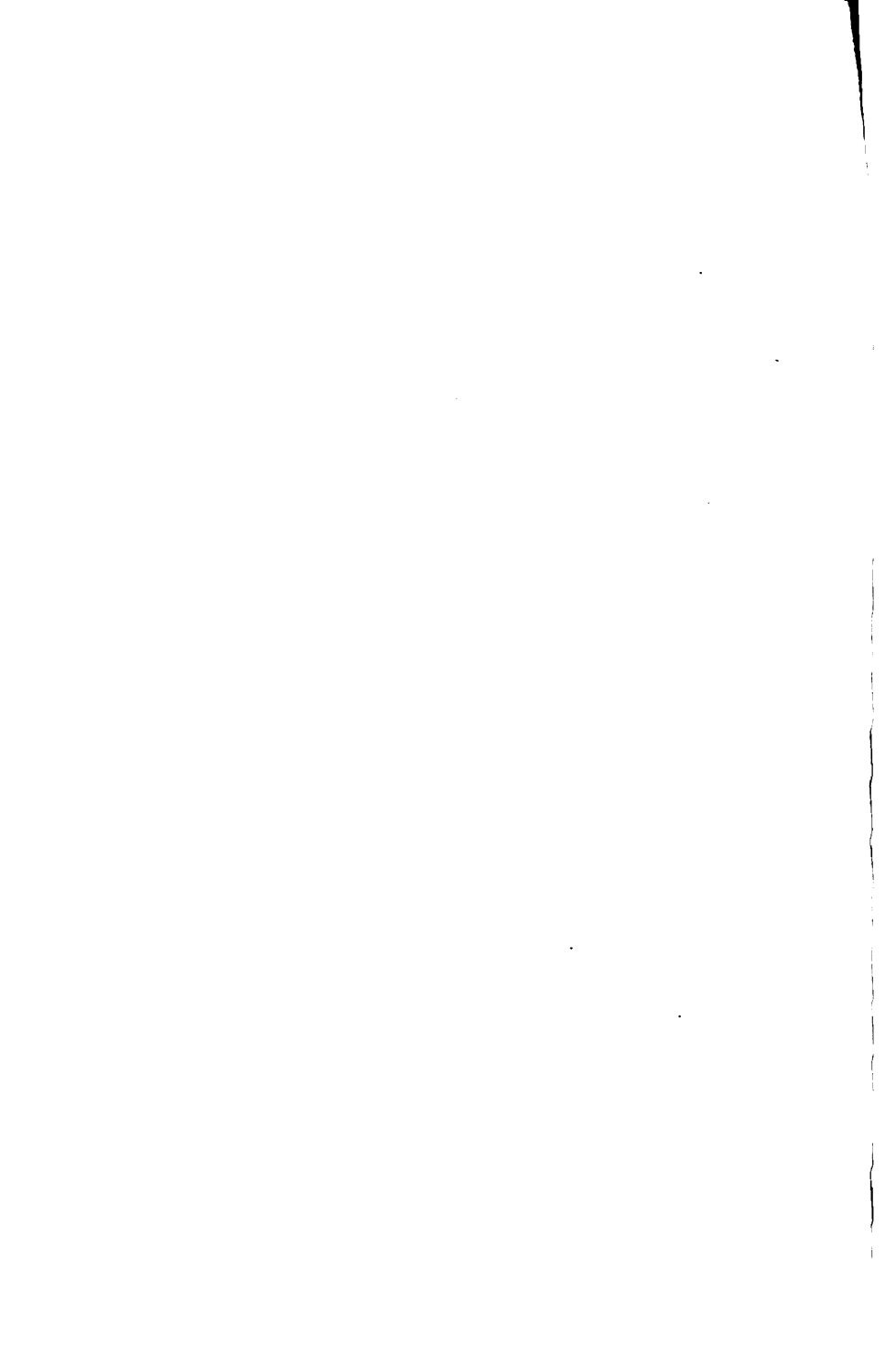
which has been so firmly imbedded in the minds of most golfers that they cannot seem to overcome it. It is a persistent enemy of all the iron shots, and unless a player firmly decides to actually drive that ball down, he will find that the old desire to hit up will be too strong to be resisted. All the things which happen to the ball should be eliminated from the mind; the scheme of play will take care of the shot.

Do not try to see all the steps in the stroke. Make your swing freely and do not spare the turf. Hit the ball clean and true and you cannot possibly make any mistake. Remember that the fact that you take turf is no excuse for hitting harder for the reason that at the time the turf begins to stop your club the ball is away on its journey. It will feel as though it needed more power but it does not. The scheme gives a great deal more leeway for the shot to be brought off in the first place and there is nothing in the blow being delivered which requires more power. The same thing I have spoken of before, regarding accuracy giving distance, applies here, as in fact to every club in the bag. If you are to get the

GOLF.

ball up you must make your stroke down as I show in the cut; otherwise the shot will be of no value. Midiron shots will never be well played by a player who is afraid of spoiling the turf.

**WHAT YOU CAN DO WITH THE
MIDIRON**



CHAPTER XV

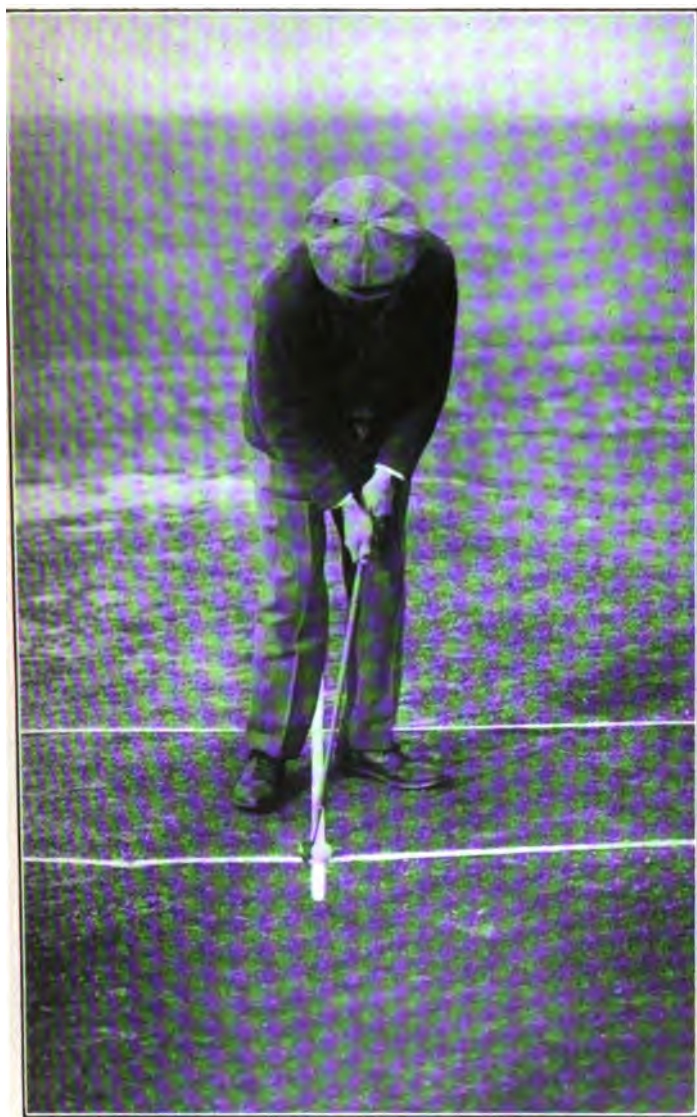
WHAT YOU CAN DO WITH THE MIDIRON

WHEN it is considered how the first instructions a player receives become fixed in his mind it is no wonder that one of the most useful midiron shots in the entire list is neglected. That shot is the "running-up" approach. When the average player initiates a friend he usually advises him to take a mashie for all short shots, but those who have cultivated the "running-up" approach with the midiron have been well paid for their pains, and it is astonishing how few players realize that the shot is safer and easier than with the mashie. In only one case, that is when the nature of the ground ahead of the player absolutely compels a pitched shot, is the mashie more useful. When the player finds himself short or over the green with nothing intervening, and from forty yards down from the pin, he will have occasion to utilize this shot.

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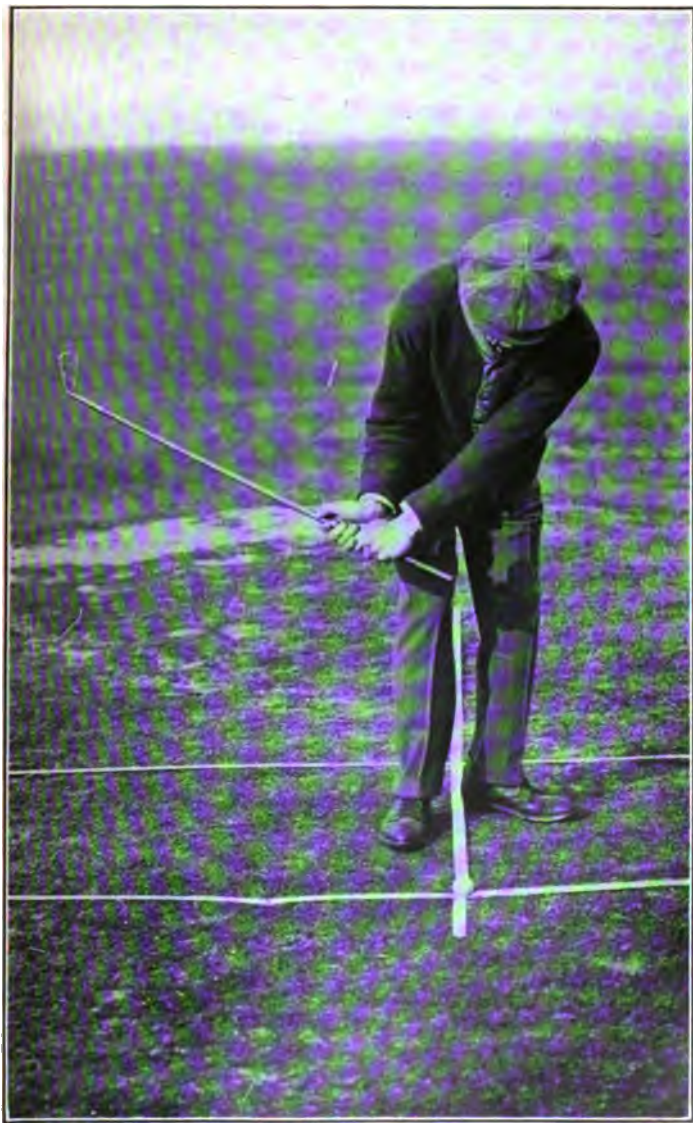
The same mechanical principles which govern the full "squeeze shot," which I have described, obtain with the shorter shot. That is, the idea must be to drive the ball downward against the turf and the ball will rise upon the rebound and run along over any kind of ground with the greatest tenacity to hold its line. This is due to the forward twist, as a result of the drag put upon the under side of the ball by the ground while in contact with it in the initial part of the journey. It should be remembered that the ball is not compressed to the same extent as when it is hit harder, and that in consequence it will not rise much, but will gain its distance from the roll.

Reference to the diagram of the squeeze shot on page 212 will serve to illustrate the method of playing this shot, but the club does not go into the turf so deep. At the moment of striking the ball the face of the club turns away to the right of the desired line a little and as the ball leaves the club the club face is at exact right angles to the desired direction. The toe of the club is not stopped there, however, but continues the turn which brought it at right angles when the



ADDRESS FOR THE RUNNING UP SHOT WITH THE MID-IRON.



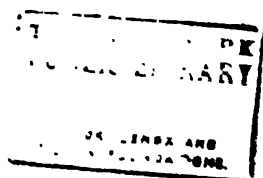


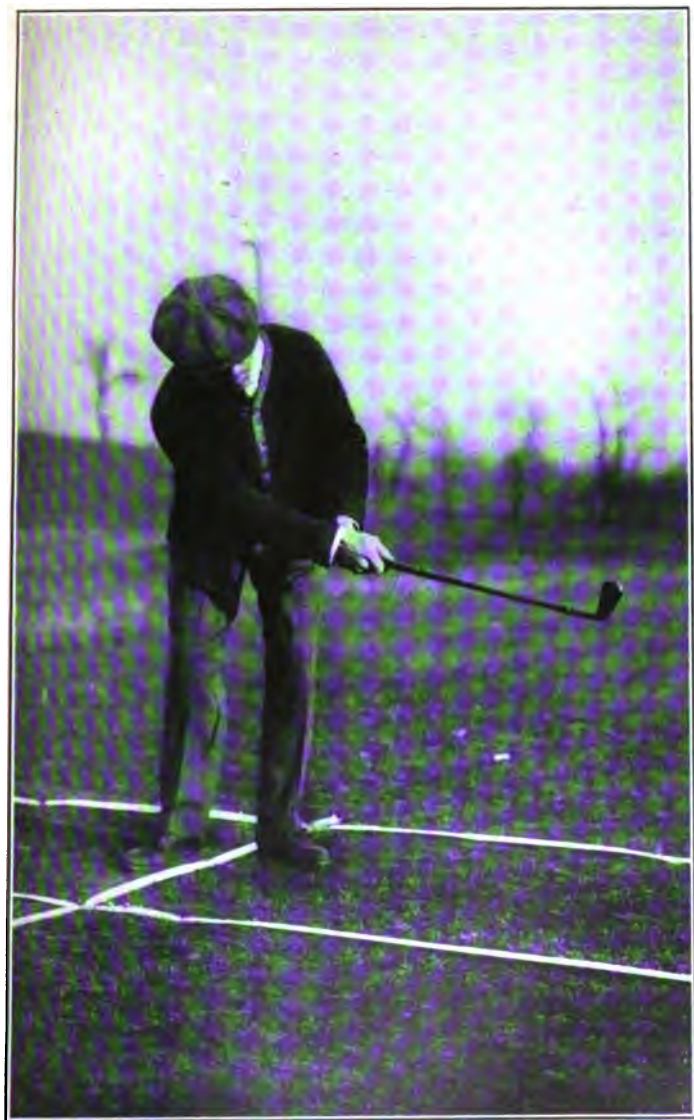
**TOP OF SWING FOR RUNNING UP SHOT WITH THE MID-
IRON. THE CLUB IS DRAGGED FORWARD RATHER
THAN PIVOTED AT THE WRISTS AND COMES DOWN
MOSTLY OF ITS OWN WEIGHT.**



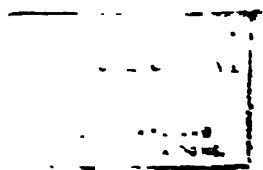


STRIKING THE BALL IN RUNNING UP SHOT WITH MID-IRON. THE EFFORT IS MADE DOWNWARD AND THE CLUB DOES THE WORK.





**FINISH OF RUNNING UP SHOT WITH MID-IRON. NOTE
THAT THE TOE OF THE CLUB IS POINTING UP.**



THE MIDIRON

ball left the club. There is only one point which should be watched carefully, and that is to have the toe of the club point down more than in the ordinary method of playing it, because this gives the hands a chance to lend greater delicacy to the shot.

The player will find from experience that he has far more of a tendency to look up than with any other shot, and a good thing to remember in playing all shots is to keep the head absolutely still and never allow the eye to leave the ball for an instant until the club head meets it. There is always more anxiety to see where the ball is going on a short shot than on a long one, because the short shot is played at a more critical time and when the winner of the hole is soon to be determined. There are more things to be considered as well, because the player is using his club with a greater proportionate range than when playing a club to its maximum distance. Besides this, the distance the club is traveling through its sweep or arc is consuming much more time than the same distance with the same club consumes in a full shot.

GOLF.

The common fault with all players is in hurrying the stroke. The stroke is delicate and should be played with much of the pendulum idea, the same as with a putter. Accuracy in hitting is the keynote of success with this short shot.

I have learned from experience that "half-topping" is the fault which happens most, on a short, running-up shot, as sclaffing is on a short pitched shot, and that a scheme to prevent these faults is a great help in inspiring confidence and even in bringing off the shot although anxiety does make the player look up too soon. For instance, if the player can assume some stance or attitude whereby he cannot swing over his ball, or even go above a certain point, that is an advantage. As most of the power in a short shot comes from the weight of the club alone and the distance back it is lifted, it should be an easy matter for the player to devise some scheme which will make it extremely awkward to use the arms and hands for anything else than lifting the club and guiding it again.

In my own case I use the elbow of my right

THE MIDIRON

arm as the pivot of the stroke, bringing my elbow close to my side. This prevents shifting the pivot of the stroke. As the lowest point in a vertical circle will always be exactly opposite and at right angles to the pivot, it is necessary, if the club is to strike the ball before that lowest point is reached, that the pivot be located ahead of the ball as in all the other shots. The player must bear in mind that all these factors are solved when you take your stance. Your purpose, as I have previously explained, must be to hit the ball down against the ground. Do not jerk the club at the ball, but let it come down freely with its own weight. You will then educate your muscles to the "feel" of the correct amount of back swing to obtain a given distance.

You will find from experience that you will always look up the instant you have made your effort, whether it is a short shot or a full shot, and this is a fact which few players have ever considered. It is an involuntary action. Making the effort too soon results in looking up too soon, and it is the cause of more strokes added to one's score than all other causes combined. Mak-

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ing the effort too soon is in itself the result of trying to hit too hard and not waiting for the club to do the work. The mental discipline necessary to hold one's self in check is the thing to be sought after. Hit the ball true in the center of the club face a few times and your confidence in yourself will come quickly.

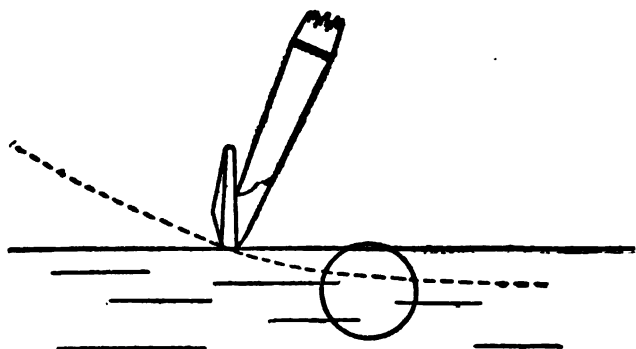


Figure 1

Absolute freedom and comfort are essential in the stroke, and nothing approaching stiffness must be introduced at any point. Practice alone will accomplish this, and the whole operation must be an endeavor to keep the club perfectly balanced and poised throughout. Avoid timidity in hitting and strike firmly, but not hard.

Among the very useful shots which it is pos-

THE MIDIRON

sible to play with the midiron—and that is the best club to get distance—is that out of water. This shot gives a nice little problem to be solved, if it is played successfully. It is well known that water is incompressible, but at the same time it is very fluid. By referring to figure 1, you will observe that the aim and sweep of the club are as



Figure 2

though you were going to half top the ball and first meet the water about two inches back of it. The result of the blow against the water is to make the water in front of the club rise to a higher level with a very sharp jump, and no matter how fast the club is moving, the water will jump up and carry the ball with it with an equal speed.

GOLF

In addition to the wave created ahead of it by the club, the pressure of the water in every direction, forcing up to replace that which is splashed in the air, causes the ball to move with it to meet the club and intensifies the blow which is being reduced by the resistance of the water. By the time the club actually reaches the spot formerly occupied by the ball these various forces have jumped the ball up so that it is practically suspended for an instant in the direct path of the center of the club face, but there is yet considerable speed and power to the club, and the ball will go forward about fifty to seventy-five yards if the shot is well played. The success of the shot depends upon striking the water at the right point, neither too far back of the ball nor too near it. In the former case too much water will be taken and the ball will jump up so high that the club will come under it, and in the latter case the ball will actually be half-topped. The correct distance is about two to three inches back of the ball, and the player should endeavor to skim off about a half inch of the water ahead of it.

The blow must not be delivered with a cut as

THE MIDIRON

though you were cutting into the water with the bottom edge of the club, but should be as though you were trying to see how far you could plow along the surface of the water with the club sunk about a half inch into it. Taking too much water will kill the force of the blow, while too little will not jump the ball up high enough to meet it squarely. Study the illustrations carefully and you will get the right idea.

The follow through is of the very greatest importance, and to make the shot successfully the player must not fear being splashed. Above all else, it is important to keep the head still in order to see that you hit the correct distance back of the ball. By tilting the mashie or niblick so that the club face is presented at the same angle as the cut, or at right angles to the surface of the water, the same shot can be played with those clubs, but the shot is not as sure, because the tendency is to go under the ball, as these two clubs feed into the water too quickly, too much water is taken, and the ball jumps over the club head. Hit hard and freely.

Perhaps one of the most important shots which

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the midiron is called upon to play is when the ball is lying in long grass, from four to eight inches tall, and when it is not too heavy with clover or too thick and matted; that, for instance, which is most common upon our average American course. It is an absolute fluke in the majority of cases when the beginner manages to get his ball out at all with his midiron played in the ordinary manner.

Played as though the ball was lying on the fair green, where you can get at it, and this is the usual way the shot is played, you have no chance, for a great number of reasons. In the first place, the eye unconsciously guides the club too high in order not to hit the surface of the ground, which it sees in the form of grass much higher than the ball. It is presumed, of course, that the player is looking at his ball in a general way, because he is endeavoring to get it out of the grass. If the club does get down to the ball it cannot be struck with the face, because there is three-quarters of an inch of grass between the ball and it, and because the grass is actually being folded over the ball and preventing its rise.

THE MIDIRON

Besides this, the club face being brought straight down through the grass offers its full width to the resistance. Furthermore the angle at which the shaft of the club is going through enables the grass to wind itself around the shank of the club, twisting it in the bands, no matter how strong the grip. This turns the face of the club in still more and absolutely kills any chance of getting the ball out. The result of this scheme of play is that the ball jumps ahead a yard or two and the operation is continued. The same result often happens almost to the same degree with the mashie.

Naturally the common sense of the player will convince him after a few trials that he has not a chance of getting much power to the ball with the club head attempting to pull up all the grass by the roots which it meets on its sweep along the ground. But he need not despair. There is a way, and a very practicable way, of playing the midiron out of rough.

In the first place, if you will make the experiment of hitting down on the grass in a perpendicular direction you will find that it offers little or

GOLF

no resistance to the club. If you will swing through the grass with the face of the club dragging behind the shank, parallel with the direction the club is traveling, you will find that the club will plough through pretty easily. These two facts should indicate that if there is to be much power and speed carried to the ball the blow must be a combination of these two factors; that is, the predominating effort must be to strike the grass in a direction that will meet with the least resistance, and that is downward, and not forward.

In any case the blow must be struck so as not to fold the grass over upon the ball, and this is bound to be done unless the grass for about four inches back of the ball is cut off at the roots by the sharp edge of the club when it is about to meet the ball. To get to the roots of the grass that far back of the ball and have much speed the club must be brought down vertically, with the face of the club pointing well away from the ball. When that point is reached the club must be forced with great rapidity around so that the bottom edge of the club will cut the grass off at the roots and meet the ball square. This turn will

THE MIDIRON

be greatly facilitated by the action of the grass which winds around the shank of the club, due to the fact that the club shaft is pointing at the ground at an angle of about fifty degrees.

This is one of the cases where drawing in the hands and getting a slice is a decided advantage, because, as you were coming down so straight, drawing in the hands prevents the club going too deep into the ground and thus wasting the effort, and as the ball is shot out of the grass it has the usual twist given by the club drawing across the ball. This twist is emphasized by the drag of the grass upon the under side of the ball as it comes out and forward. The result is that you get a ball which comes out quickly, but which ducks quite sharply and shoots forward with a tremendous roll when it strikes the ground. In moderately heavy rough grass it is possible for the average player to get one hundred and fifty to one hundred and seventy-five yards if the stroke is played correctly.

To gain a simple mental picture of the stroke the player should imagine that he is playing a regular midiron shot on the fair green, down hill,

GOLF

on a very steep incline and is trying to drive the ball along the ground by aiming about four inches back of the ball in order to be "down" when he reaches it. If the grass is very heavy it will be possible to get a very fair ball away by emphasizing the slice by turning the face of the club away to the right of the hole and aiming an equal distance to the left to allow for the slice which results. The whole success of the stroke depends upon pounding the club down hard into the turf back of the ball. Don't be afraid of your club shaft and hit hard.

USE OF THE MASHIE

CHAPTER XVI

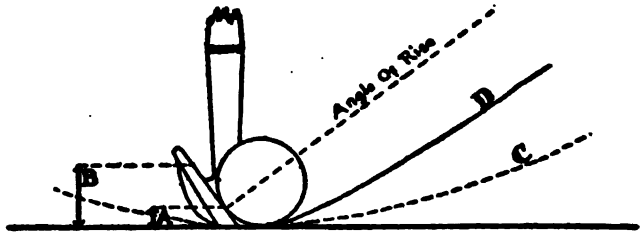
USE OF THE MASHIE

IT is with real pleasure that I take up the mashie shot, because the mashie is my favorite club, if favorite there can be, as I have devoted more time and study to the shot than all others. It is a club which has vast possibilities, and is called upon to play a greater range of shots than all the other clubs combined. At the same time it is understood by comparatively few players, and even among the professionals I have heard some mighty funny theories advanced as to the way it should be played. From what I have observed, the majority of professionals play the club correctly from practice and in spite of their theories.

To look at the club and note the angle or loft to the face of it, the theory of the correct method of playing it may seem simple, but it is not a simple club to play according to the theory. The

GOLF

fact that almost every player you see addresses his ball with the club shaft at right angles to the desired line of flight shows that his mental picture of the stroke must be that also, or he would not so address the ball. The idea is that the ball takes the angle of the face of the club, as I show by dotted line called the angle of rise. Players have informed me that they can play off a



board floor that way, and it must be correct. It is correct for a board floor, because the club cannot go too low and is bound to slide along the floor, but for soft turf and grass, it is not the easiest way.

The latitude for error is too small and the amount of latitude is shown by the small arrow marked A. In proportion to the width of the club face, this is a very small margin, something



**ADDRESS WITH THE MASHIE FOR THE SQUEEZE SHOT. THE
LOWEST POINT IN THE SWING IS OPPOSITE THE
PIVOTAL CENTER AND AHEAD OF THE BALL.**



USE OF THE MASHIE

like a quarter of an inch of space, into which the wedge formed by the bottom of the club must be driven to hit the ball accurately, to avoid topping and cutting it, on the one hand, and to avoid driving the wedge at the bottom of the club into the ground, on the other.

The bottom edge of a mashie is very sharp, and it is expensive, to say the least, to top the ball or even half top it. You can readily see what the effect would be to strike the ball in the middle with this club. Besides this, to drive that sharp wedge into the soft turf is wasting the force of the blow upon the ground and not the ball. This very fact is one which is productive of one of the most useful shots with the mashie, as I shall explain in another place, but the shot is not played with any idea of the club moving in the arc shown by the dotted line marked C.

The theory of the shot as I have drawn it is rendered still more difficult and almost impossible by players who seem to think they must get under the ball and hit up, applying the power to push the ball up along the line of the angle of rise, at right angles to the face of the club. Even with

GOLF

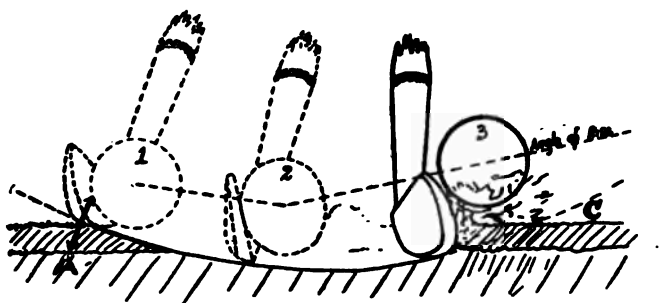
this theory of play the arc of the club head should be very flat in order to hit the ball, but nine players out of ten do not try for the flat arc. At the last moment when they meet the ball they lift the club by turning the wrists up in order to get the ball up or "lift" it, their idea being that in order to get the height the club must come up with the ball along the solid line marked D.

With this theory the club must sweep through the arc shown by dotted line C, but even then the latitude for error is so small that it is very, very difficult to bring any kind of a shot off with certainty, and the amount of spoiled mashie shots is shown in the scores of the high handicap men. In addition to this the player has no such hitting surface to use as the width of the club face might indicate. In reality he has only the width shown by the dotted line B, and that is narrower than the face of his cleek.

I have drawn three views of the club and ball in order to show what takes place during the short interval of time when the club is against the ground. In the first place I direct attention to position 1 to show how much more latitude for

USE OF THE MASHIE

error is given by hitting down instead of parallel with the ground, as in the average player's theory. By referring to the solid line marked A, you will observe that you have a space nearly as wide as the club head in which to hit with the bottom edge of the club and still get off a very fair shot. This is about four times as much leeway as you



have in the other scheme. In order to have the club coming down and the shaft pointing at the angle it is, the hands must be ahead of the ball.

To give a simple explanation of this way of playing the shot, just imagine you are playing on the same theory you have been, and instead of taking the usual stance, take a position as though the ground under your left foot was to sink down six inches. Then you will pick off the

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ball in the same way, but your club will go into the ground after you hit it instead of starting to rise from the ground the instant you hit the ball. As the club meets the ground the tendency of the head of the club is to turn away to the right. This must be overcome by turning the club face in more than you are accustomed to by turning the wrists over harder when you meet the ball. You will find that your ball goes a little more to the left than you have been used to, but by facing the club more to the right, as shown in position 1, this is easily overcome. Then when the ball is struck the club head moves along almost parallel with the angle of rise and you have no need of hitting so hard, because you are tilting the face of your club at an angle equivalent to the loft on a midiron.

This is the simplest shot with the mashie, because it gives the greatest amount of leeway, and does not require such accuracy as does the average player's theory. It is as though the ball were teed up when you strike at it, with more room to get under it. By facing the club to the right in the address the face comes at perfect right

USE OF THE MASHIE

angles to the desired line at the instant the ball leaves it, as shown in position 2. In order to be sure of this the hands must be turned hard, or the club will feed too deep into the turf, killing the distance and spoiling the direction. This shot enables the player to strike with more confidence and freedom, which is much to be desired. The purpose in the player's mind must be to drive the ball down along the same line as shown by the dotted line running from the center of the ball in position 1. Never give a thought to the ball getting up or you will start to turn the wrists up and spoil the shot.

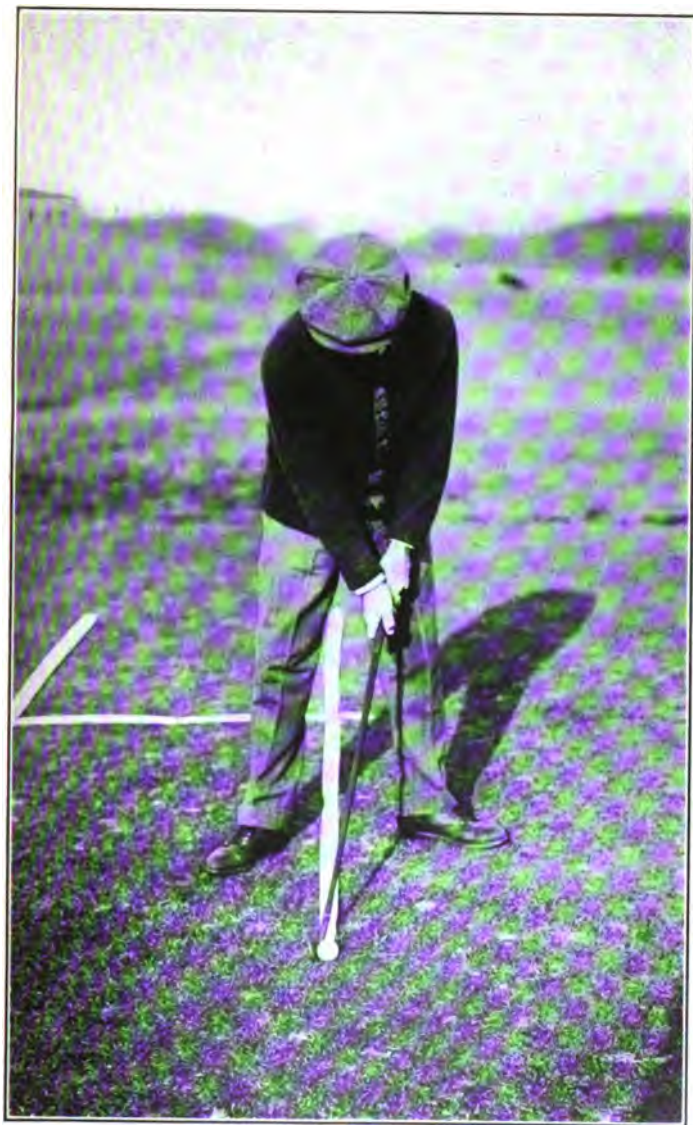
In every iron shot the purpose in the player's mind must be to hit down if he is going to get the ball up. The club will take care of the rise. If you do not have that purpose in your mind you will top your shot nine times out of ten. By noting the incline of the club shaft you will see that the hands must not be stopped when your club reaches the ball, but must sweep along with the club. Also there should be a good deal of a drag in the shot, with the left elbow pointing out at the flag and the right hand pushed forward

GOLF

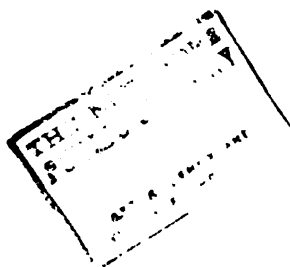
with the hand bent backward very much. As such details, however, are apt to be confusing, I recommend that the player make his club head act as shown in the cut, and thrash out his own method of doing it. The important thing is to keep the club in contact with the ball, because that is what affects the ball's flight.

Players are apt to be so much impressed by another player's swing that they lose sight of the vital point, which is the way the club head meets the ball and acts while in contact with it. Do not hit hard, and above all else fix your attention, after you have mapped out your purpose, upon keeping your head absolutely still, and you will become in a short time a first-class mashie player.

An important shot with the mashie is the high pitch. In offering my method of playing this shot I know that it differs from the usual theory in that I put no "cut" or back spin upon the ball whatever. I have found from experience that I can get the ball up quicker or at a more acute angle by my scheme than by the so-called "cut stroke," which is supposed to put a back spin upon the ball and stop it quickly. I have made

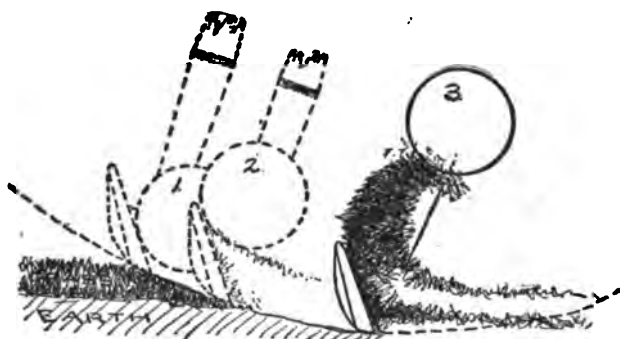


**ADDRESS WITH MASHIE FOR SQUEEZE SHOT. NOTE THAT
THE LOWEST POINT IN THE SWING WILL BE
AHEAD OF THE BALL.**



USE OF THE MASHIE

two drawings showing the principal stages of the club head and ball, and from them it will be seen that the angle of the club face is directly contrary to the usual idea, in which the club face is "laid back" or tilted with a still greater angle than that with which it was built. The prevailing



idea is to get under the ball and hit up. The principle in my method is to drive my club head, which is built like a wedge at the bottom, into the ground behind the ball in order to push up the ground upon which the ball is resting, and it is the combination of the two forces, one propelling the ball and turf forward, and the other driving the club down, which gives the desired rise to the ball. In the diagram, position 1, you will see

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that the first effect of the club meeting the ball is to put a back spin upon it, but that is instantly stopped by the brake being applied by the turf and the result is a reaction, emphasizing the tendency of the ball to come up straight in the air. As the turf slides up the face of the club, as shown in position 2, the ball is pushed up with it while both the turf and the ball are being driven forward by the general direction in which the club head is traveling.

By noting position 3 in the diagram you will see that the ball is rising at a greater angle than the angle of the club face, due to the fact that the turf is sliding up over the club face as the club head is driven deeper and forward and the ball is pushed up and forward with it. As the turf is in contact with the ball during the entire time that the energy is being transmitted, it effectually prevents any spin being imparted to it. The ball goes away on its flight without any eccentric motions and when it lands it bounces straight in the direction it is being propelled, and does not have the tendency to kick off to one side, which a ball with back spin does. In other words, I do not

USE OF THE MASHIE

slice the ball at all, it has no tendency to duck, and it will stop quicker than any "cut stroke" I have ever seen. It allows for three or four times as much leeway for error, requires no delicate timing as does the other method, and is simple to play in consequence. Every good professional golfer I have seen plays the shot in this way, and they take a good big divot the full width of the club face.

The confidence necessary to pound the club down into the ground in a contrary direction to that in which you wish to send the ball will come quickly if the player will think of the club head plowing along under the turf upon which the ball is resting. Of course a reasonable amount of care must be exercised to avoid meeting the turf too far back of the ball; about half an inch to an inch is the proper distance, according to the amount of rise required and the distance forward you wish to send it. To make the shot successfully do not attempt to turn up the wrists when your club is in the turf, but, on the contrary, turn the hands over—as in all the iron shots—as though you were trying to push the toe of the

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club deeper into the ground. Also play the shot as though it were the divot you were trying to play forward and not the ball. This will enable you to "follow through" correctly. Do not spare the turf, and remember that you never see a professional break a shaft, although he takes a much larger divot than you do as a rule. Strike firmly and freely, and spare not.

In regard to the stance with the mashie, I have tried every conceivable method, and I am convinced that the best scheme is to study the ball more and the flag less. The first glance at the flag will tell you as much as fifteen minutes gazing at it; the balance of the time occupied in making the stroke should be devoted solely to the space occupying about a yard circle in which you are standing with the ball in front of you. Bad direction does not come from a faulty study of the line, but from faulty connection between the club head and the ball. It is really astonishing how the player unconsciously sends his ball off on the correct line when he hits it perfectly true.

Common sense should tell you that you cannot

USE OF THE MASHIE

watch the line and the ball at the same time. The purpose in taking the stance is to give you your direction. How seldom you see an amateur rely upon that, however. He takes his stance and then commences to tire his eyes and muscles by a further study of the direction. Once you take your stance you should never again think of the direction. One more glance to gage the distance and then everything should be devoted to hitting the ball true. Have more confidence, and the best way to get that is to acquire experience and familiarity with the "feel" of a correctly hit ball.

All the careful study of line and distance is lost in any case when you do not hit true, and fifty shots are spoiled by not hitting true to one which is off direction as a result of lack of study of the line. It is the way your club head meets the ball which affects the flight and not the way your shoulders are acting or your hands or a hundred other things are behaving. Forget all those items and think only of keeping your head still when you are swinging at the ball.

Do not spend so much time in studying the nature of the ground between the cup and your-

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self or where you must drop the ball or anything of that sort. Look at the flag and gage the distance and then hit your ball to go that distance. The club hitting the ball true will take care of all the trouble between you and the cup. Bunkers are really more of a mental than a physical hazard, because if you hit your ball true and for the correct distance the bunkers might just as well not exist, as far as affecting the flight of the ball is concerned. If a good player could exchange his knowledge with a poor player the latter would be astonished at the few things which he has to observe to bring off his shot. If I could convince players that keeping my head absolutely still was the secret of bringing off shots which look mighty difficult, they would be dissatisfied with its simplicity and begin to create new mental hazards, because they are apparently anxious to make the game as difficult as possible.

I presume every player who has mastered a certain difficult shot has laughed in his sleeve when his less skilful mates have marveled at his cleverness. Let them think it is cleverness and don't tell them that hitting the ball true did all



ADDRESS WITH MASHIE FOR "PICKED" SHOT.



USE OF THE MASHIE

the difficult work. "A pit full of starving bears," as I read in a humorous article some time ago, is only a mental hazard and cannot possibly affect a well hit ball.

The most difficult hazard in golf is the desire to swing hard.

WITH JIGGER AND NIBLICK

CHAPTER XVII

WITH JIGGER AND NIBLICK

THE jigger is a cross between a midiron and a mashie, with nearly the range of the midiron and nearly the capacity for raising the ball which the mashie has. The principle of playing it is identically the same as with the other iron shots. Turf should be taken after meeting the ball. The idea is to strike so as to drive the ball against the ground, and the club will keep on into the turf, but the ball will be pushed up or bounced up by reason of the impact with the ground. I have explained in previous chapters why this method of playing irons not only will give greater distance but far greater accuracy of line. In addition to this, it is practically hitting a teed ball every time.

If a ball is on an upward incline it is easy to hit it clean with the club, and if the purpose in the player's mind is to drive the ball against the

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ground it brings all the effort in a similar direction, just as though the ball was teed, or was resting upon an upward incline. By referring frequently to the illustrations I have made in previous chapters it will become clearer and clearer to the player what that method of playing the stroke will accomplish.

The vast majority of so-called jiggers are misnomers. Generally they are distorted mashies. They have not the hitting surface of the mashie, yet they have the same "loft." A true jigger should have nearly the incline which a midiron has, but a narrower blade, in order to have the bulk of the weight well below the center of the ball to emphasize its tendency to make the ball rise. It should really give a much longer ball than a mashie is capable of if played with the same amount of effort. The player should remember that his club should propel the ball down against the ground. The ball will bounce back, while the club continues along practically the same line. This is how turf is taken after hitting the ball. This is really the only club with which it is comparatively easy to pick a ball off hard

WITH JIGGER AND NIBLICK

surface or sand. The broad base prevents it feeding too deep into the turf or sand, and a very long ball is possible. The majority of jiggers are laid back too much and do not allow of a sufficient additional distance with the same effort you would make with the mashie.

For low running-up shots where it is desired to "kill" the run on the ball the jigger is much easier to play than the mashie, but as it always requires greater skill to play any stroke with a cut to it than a plain running shot, I very much prefer the midiron, as the same amount of skill will give much finer results. The amount of "kill" or drag depends very largely upon the nature of the ground upon which the ball lands, and I have found from experience that I get better average results with the midiron.

The high pitched shot with a niblick is as useful if not more useful than the high pitch with a mashie, not only because it is possible to get the ball up much more quickly, but that very fact means that it will come down straighter, meeting the ground more nearly at right angles and consequently stopping quicker. Many players seem

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to think that a niblick should be played only in traps or difficulties, and that it looks unskilful to use a niblick on the fair green.

In my own case I always try for the easiest way to play a shot, and I find that I can get results with a niblick for pitched shots up to ninety yards that I cannot get with my mashie. With the turf in good shape I can drop a fifty-yard pitch practically dead, and this I cannot do with certainty with the mashie. The mashie gives me more distance than I need when I have occasion to get it up quickly. Say that you have about forty yards to go to the flag and two-thirds of the distance away there is a bunker and trap guarding the hole, and you cannot play a pitch and run shot because you are landing on a smooth green with the flag too near to hold it; this is where the shot with the niblick comes in very well.

The swing is made very vertically with the hands well ahead of the club head, and the purpose in the player's mind must be to drive the club head deep into the ground close behind the ball, with the idea of playing the divot up to the

WITH JIGGER AND NIBLICK

flag. You are really driving a wedge down close behind the ball, and as the thicker part of the wedge meets the ball, which has already started nearly straight up in the air (due to the small end of the wedge pushing the turf up under the ball), it is propelled forward, but as the ball is already in motion the bulk of the force of the blow is sending the ball up and not forward. There is practically no back spin on the ball, and the reason it stops dead short is that it comes down so straight.

The player should think only of the wedge going into the turf because it is the sharp impact of the club meeting and displacing the turf which sends the ball away rather than the direct blow of the club head upon the ball. Do not be afraid of taking a big divot and getting well under the roots of the grass. Follow through, but let it be well into the ground.

You cannot get over ninety yards, and it is wiser not to attempt even that distance until you have mastered the shot. You strike the ball with a very glancing blow and the turf stops the back spin and emphasizes the quick rise. As you play

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the shot, be even more particular to hit firmly and freely, and on no account allow yourself to look up. The stroke is played with the hands pretty well down, with the left arm kept well down at all stages, and the principal movement in the wrists. The farther back of the ball you hit, the more the rise to the ball is emphasized, but the shorter the distance forward the ball will go. It will pay to cultivate this shot, as the player will find many occasions where it will be extremely useful.

When I play this shot, I take a divot about an inch thick and seven to twelve inches long, with a great deal of earth coming out with the grass. Hit freely and firmly.

It sometimes happens in golf that you find your ball in a sand trap behind a bunker with the green on the other side. It is a shot that can be played with accuracy and precision if the player gets the correct idea. The basic idea in this shot is to come down very sharply and drive the bottom of the club deep down and well below the ball, treating the shot as though the ball were not there at all and you were trying merely to play

WITH JIGGER AND NIBLICK

about as much sand as you can get your club head into the distance you desire to go. Aim at least the width of the club head behind the ball and hit freely and firmly, remembering to follow through in order to throw the sand at the point you want to reach. There is no delicacy required. Give a good stiff poke and the ball will go as far as a piece of gravel would and not much more.

It is the sand you are playing to the cup and not the ball. Any attempt to strike the ball with the club head will spoil the shot. Hit down sharp and when you get into the sand push ahead hard. You are really gouging out the amount of sand your club head will hold and jerking it over the bunker. I stand well ahead of my ball with my left knee bent considerably in order to pull the club forward instead of pushing it forward, as it is easier and you can get a much greater amount of the body into the stroke. In clean, dry sea sand it is possible to send a ball well up in the air and for fifty yards forward.

The reason for the failure of the majority of players in this shot is that they think they must strike the ball with the club. Do not look at the

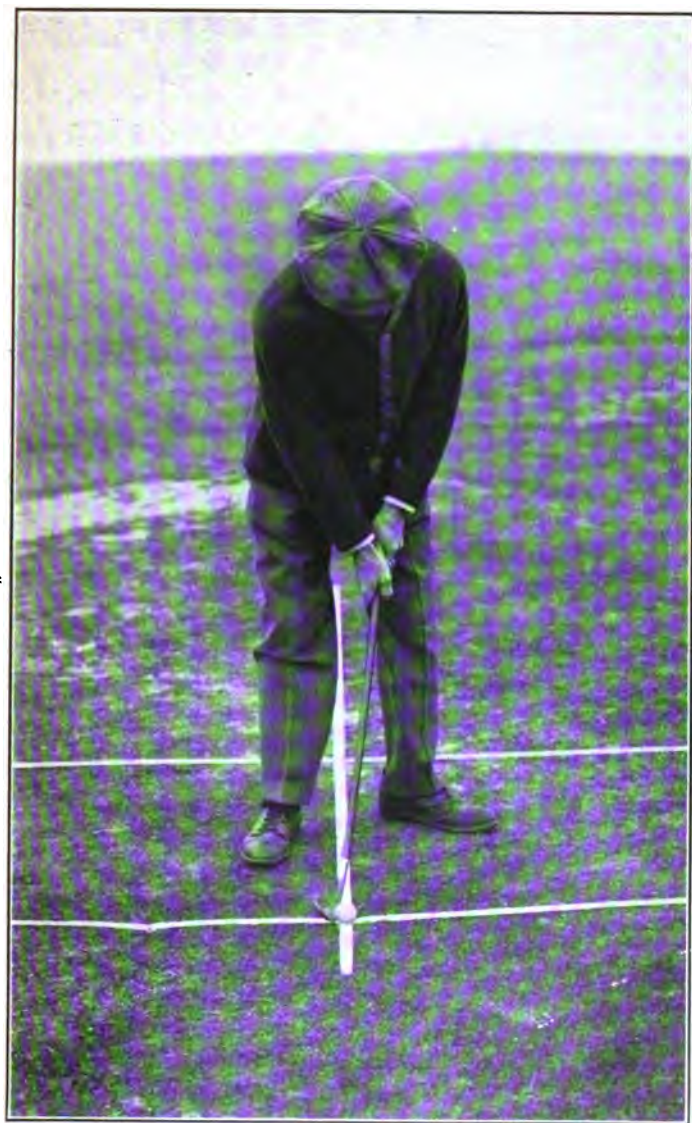
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ball at all. Gage about the width of the club face back of the ball and hit down hard and straight into the sand and then yank the club forward and you will not only get out and over the bunker, but a little practice will enable you to place the ball very close to the pin. You must hit just as hard as you would in playing a hundred yards on the fair green, but be careful not to hit too near the ball.

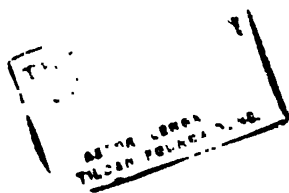
This is a shot which is well worth the time devoted to practicing it and it is the despair of a competitor who is counting that hole as won. I have seen players not only get a half by playing this shot well but often to win the hole, as the recovery so rattled their opponent.

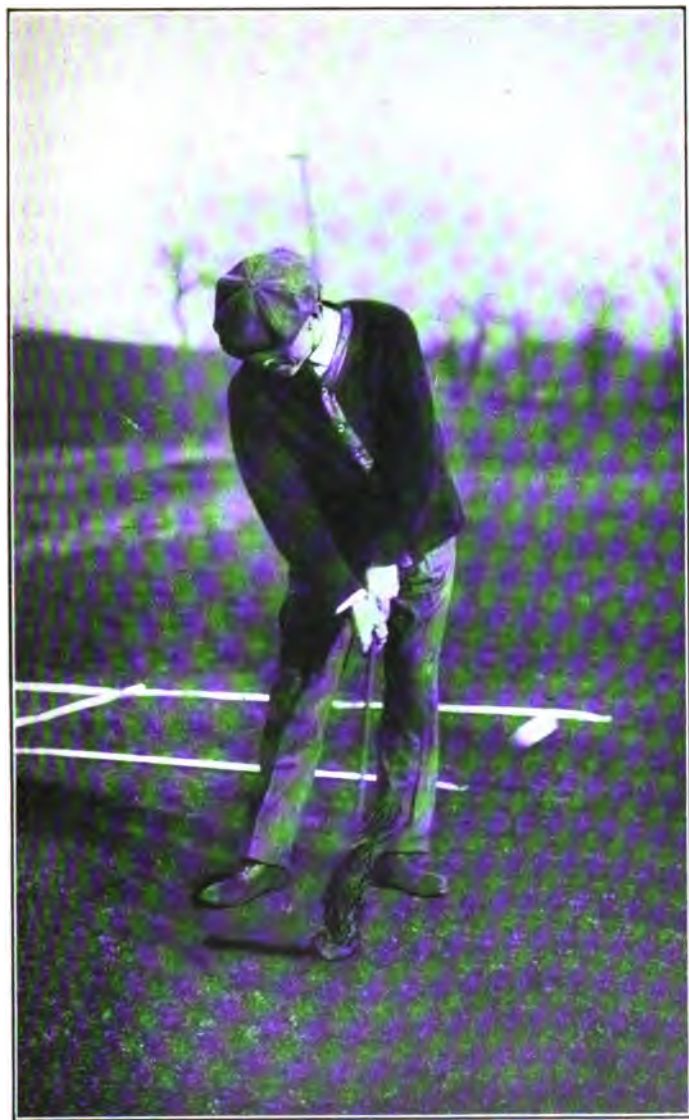
It is not my purpose to enter into more detailed shots with this club, such as "lofting a stymie" or "cut strokes," or any similar shots, for the reason that such shots are only within the compass of the advanced player and the relative importance of them for the average player is not great. Learn any of the shots I have indicated and the others will be well within your range.

Do not have the foolish idea that your niblick



ADDRESS WITH NIBLICK FOR SQUEEZE SHOT.





**FOLLOWING THROUGH IN THE HIGH PITCH SHOT WITH
NIBLICK. KEEP THE EYES ON THE GROUND.**





**USING THE NIBLICK IN A BUNKER. PLAY THE SAND
RATHER THAN THE BALL.**





**THE HIGH-PITCHED SHOT WITH THE NIBLICK. DON'T BE
AFRAID TO BEND THE SHAFT.**

WITH JIGGER AND NIBLICK

should only be used when in "trouble." Many a pitched shot is a simple pitch with a niblick which would be a very difficult shot with the ordinary mashie. Many players have the same amount of "loft" or incline to the face of their mashie that they have on their niblick; there is no sense in this because it gives you insufficient range between the two shots. Make a practice of using the club which will accomplish the desired result in the easiest manner. If you are compelled to pitch a ball high on a short shot and stop very quickly when you land, use your niblick. The shot is far easier than with the mashie.

Remember that if the high pitched shot which I have described is to be played a short distance, you must hit down with the same amount of effort you always use, and allow only that you should hit a little farther back of the ball. The same swing you are accustomed to use when striking the ground farther back will net less distance but will give you a good high ball which will stop quickly. In your scheme of play you can get better average results from swinging in an accus-

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tomed manner and with the same amount of effort.

A fact which may help some is that the time occupied in a short shot in swinging through the lower part of the arc of the circle should really be longer than when swinging the same distance with a full swing. The idea is to lift the club up a certain height and then let it come down mostly with its own weight. The reason that many players fail is that they look up too soon, and this is a natural result. The effort on the player's part has ceased, and he will always look up in spite of himself the instant he completes his main effort or purpose. As the purpose with the average player is to propel his ball, the instant he ceases to exert his muscles in propelling his club he looks up to see the result of his effort. As the effort is or should be, on a short shot, to lift the club only, he must have absolute mastery of himself if he is to avoid raising his eyes before the club head reaches the ball on its downward sweep, which is the result of letting the club come down with its own momentum.

To bring this home to your own case, take a

WITH JIGGER AND NIBLICK

dozen balls and try out the idea of pitching the ball, say twenty yards, with a niblick and it will astonish you how difficult it is to wait long enough to see the club head meet the ball with its own momentum.

The club should be held loosely and with the idea of feeling the natural balance of the club and not to make any effort to increase the speed. Guide it accurately and keep at it until you can see the club head meet the ball. This will be a valuable object lesson, not only in playing the niblick, but in playing a short shot with any club in the bag. It is difficult, mighty difficult, and yet it is the only successful way to play the shot.

ON THE PUTTING GREEN

CHAPTER XVIII

ON THE PUTTING GREEN

WHEN it comes to putting I expect that every man who reads this will feel that here at least I am going to touch upon a subject which he is as well qualified to solve for himself as any one. I believe I have missed more foot and two foot putts than any living man who has played golf the same length of time, and what I have to say about this stroke is based upon more careful and general experience than any one I have met thus far. I have little doubt that my views may not parallel those of many good putters, but I know that the plan I pursued so persistently for eight years was the reason for my erratic putting.

Right at the start I state flatly that putting is not a matter of nerve or will power at all, although I know that this opinion is directly contrary to the views I hear most often. Bitter

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experience has been my teacher and I purpose to stick to my opinions. I changed in a year and a half from a most erratic putter to a very consistent putter and I know the reason why. If nerve or will power would have holed putts for me I should never have missed a putt. I simply worked from a false theory. I have puttred as well in critical matches as I ever puttred in my life, and I have puttred as abominably in a friendly round as I ever did in a critical match. I did what I have preached against so much, and that is "stiffened" my muscles. I made the game hard for myself.

My theory was to reduce the art of putting to an exact science by some method of controlling the club which would make it impossible to go wrong. The club would have to go that way, and it was a physical impossibility for it to go any other way than that which I intended. I puttred the two extremes all the years I tried that idea; brilliantly at times and horribly at other times; worse than a man who never played the game before in his life. The putt with me was built upon an entirely different basis than



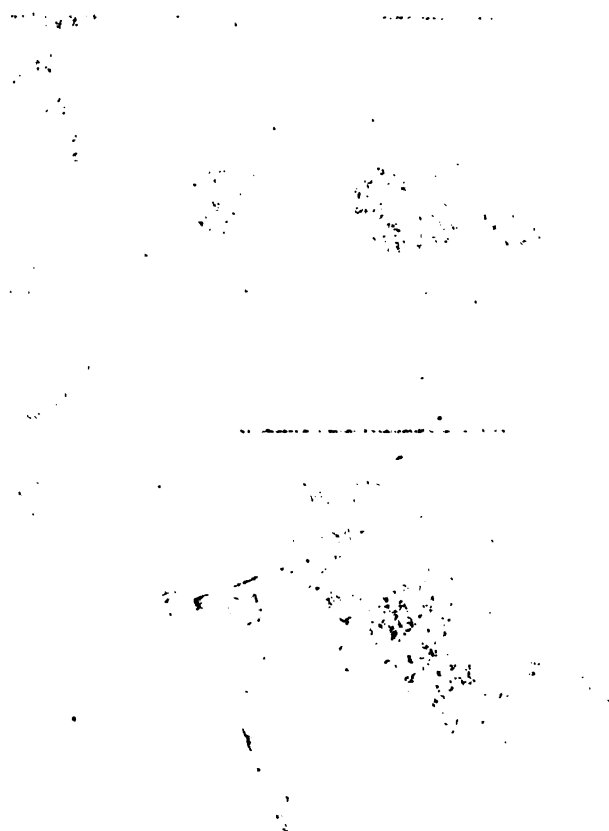
ADDRESS.



BACK SWING.



**FOLLOW THROUGH.
A WAY OF PUTTING WHICH HELPS THE PLAYER RELAX.**



ON THE PUTTING GREEN

all the rest of my game. I "set" my muscles as one would try to guide a car on wheels along a track, in such a fashion that I couldn't move the club except upon such and such a line. It was all wrong.

I kept my head still, absolutely. My grip of the club was correct. My stance was correct. My line was studied out with such care that I could not be mistaken. My club face was squared to the thousandth part of an inch. My eyes were glued upon the ball. Yet I missed short putts in a heart-breaking manner. To my mind it requires far more nerve and courage to keep on trying hard, hole after hole, knowing you have missed these baby putts, than will ever be required to hole one.

The basis of good putting, as with any other kind of shot, is in absolute relaxation of the muscles in order that they may have perfect freedom and play. The instant you "set" yourself in your address when putting, in any way where it requires you to brace yourself to keep your balance, that instant you are inviting disaster. It will "get you" sooner or later, and when you

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get off your putt it will take you a long time to come back. You are reducing your chance of keeping your eye on the ball till the club reaches it to about five per cent of what it should be and it is almost impossible to keep from looking up too soon.

To be sure, every one will putt well at times by any old method, but of this one fact you may be sure, when you are putting well you are putting easily and freely and your confidence is great. The moment you miss an easy putt your anxiety causes you to become more careful and you become more tense and brace yourself more carefully to avoid missing the next time; you "set" yourself more and more as your putting gets poorer, until finally you couldn't hole a yard putt into a bushel basket with any confidence.

I have changed putters and my stance and done everything under the sun to improve my putting when I have reached these stages, and neglected the one thing which was responsible for the damage, and that was to loosen up, hold myself flabby and limp, and putt so that my muscles were as loose and free as they were

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intended to be. I have gone to the oculist even, and spent a five-dollar bill to see if faulty vision was not responsible for my plight, only to be informed that my vision was as perfect as it could possibly be. Back I would go to the golf course to master this part of the game if I never accomplished another thing. I would putt for hours at a time and try every method which could be thought of but the right one.

The correct way was too easy for me to see it. I had at one time eleven putters in my locker. I know every form and make of putter intimately. I have had experience and plenty of it, and I sincerely trust no golfer will ever have to go through the bitter experience I have been through to learn to putt. When I have a critical putt to hole now I laugh to myself to think how such a putt has worried me in the days gone by. I know now, but I didn't then.

As I say, my idea in putting for many years was that if I "set" every muscle in my body rigidly and allowed only my wrists or arms, as the case might be, to move, and to so "set" myself that they could move only in a certain defined

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way, I could reduce the art of putting down to an exact science. The principle involved was to so hold and swing the club that it would move as though it were moving along a groove, and it would be bound to send the ball upon the correct line.

The fallacy of such a theory was not so apparent, because after an hour or two of practice I could putt with great accuracy. I had so trained my muscles that they would act only in a well-defined manner and I would putt well for a few days, sometimes for a week or two at a time, but once I lost the gage of the shot I was as helpless as a baby. I would at such times try every possible stance and angle, and for years I could not seem to get out of my head that I was not "slicing" the ball, while every one would insist that I was. I would practice to overcome it, and my friends would tell me I had succeeded. By constant and careful attention I would putt and putt, and gradually get to a point where I would be able to hole the ball regularly from good distances, and as my confidence came I would putt more and more freely, and naturally

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would relax more and more as my confidence grew and my putting improved.

It never came home to me that it was the relaxing of my painstaking rigid method of playing which was causing my improvement and not the perfecting of my method as I then believed it to be.

I would try, and did try, for months at a time, the stance and style I saw the different professionals use whose style appealed to me. I would talk to them and attempt to analyze the secret of their success, and it would seem to me that I had at last found the real secret because after much painstaking effort I would begin to putt well. In every case, as I look back upon it, the success of the scheme was due solely to the fact that constant practice was making me swing more freely and naturally and consequently relaxing my muscles more and more.

I am satisfied that I have nailed the really important secret of good putting, and that is to eliminate every item, from the moment I walk up to my putt, which in the slightest degree has a tendency to make me "set" my muscles in any

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way. For the past two years I have putted consistently and well, in spite of the fact that I have had no time for practice.

I have tried standing in the address at various angles, sometimes putting off the right foot, sometimes off the left foot, and sometimes standing square, the only idea in my mind being that of holding myself as loosely and flabbily as I could and keep my balance, and it works equally well at any angle. I have had critical putts to hole, and down they went with delightful frequency. The approach putts would invariably be closer than anything I had ever done before with any regularity. I never did "set" my muscles much in the other shots, and for years my game at other parts totally outclassed anything I could do with the putter.

Many players with whom I have played have remarked at the way my other shots outclassed my putting. In justice to myself I can say that I putted as badly at times in friendly rounds as I have ever done in matches. I have played against good golfers, and beaten them, who have thought I was a good putter and had plenty of

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"nerve." I have played other good players who have thought I had no "nerve" at all. The only difference has been that if I was putting well and had the gage I would putt well no matter whom I played, and if I was "off" my putt all my will power and determination were only emphasizing the cause of my bad putting, and that was "setting" my muscles.

For the encouragement of those players who have been inclined at times to think they lacked "nerve," I can say that it is probably more the "setting" of the muscles than lack of courage that puts them off in their putting. The average man has the average courage, and give him a reasonable chance of knowing what to do he can do it. Older men and youngsters can putt because they don't care. They go at the cup freely and give their muscles their natural play, but to the ambitious man this matter of "setting" the muscles is a serious one. When it is realized that nothing will cause the tension to the muscles or "setting" them so much as anxiety, it will readily be understood what a field this one item will open up. If the player deliberately adopts a

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style which requires him to brace or "set" himself, he can be sure that he is bound to go off his putting, and all the will power in the world will not hole the putts, because it makes it very nearly a physical impossibility to do so.

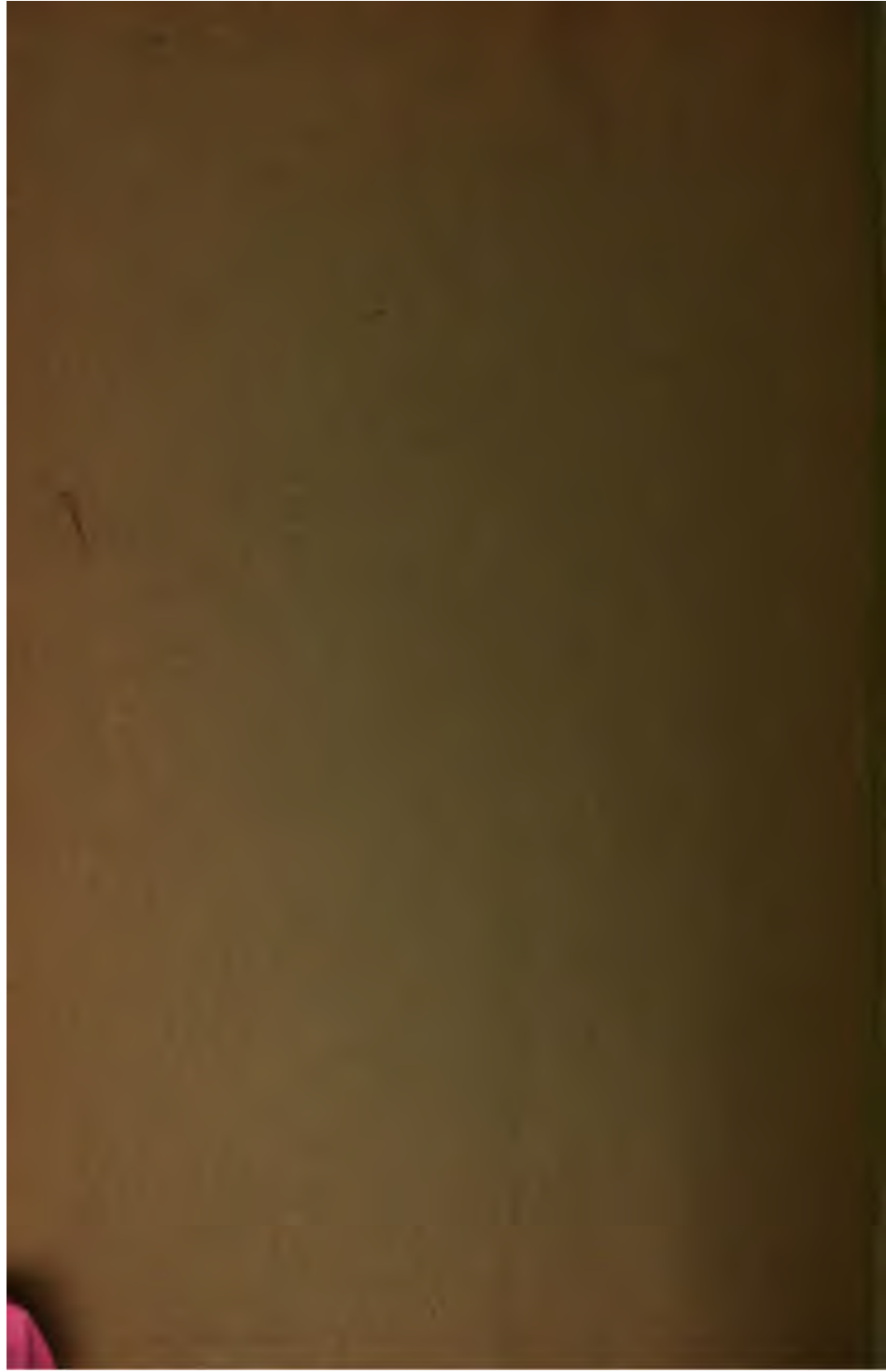
It is unnatural to believe that a man with courage in everything else will not display it in putting if he has the knowledge of how to putt and understands the cause of his failure to do so. This is why I say that it is not a matter of "nerve" at all, but knowledge of how to do it and willingness to give the muscles a chance that make a good putter.

THE END









July 7, 1934

